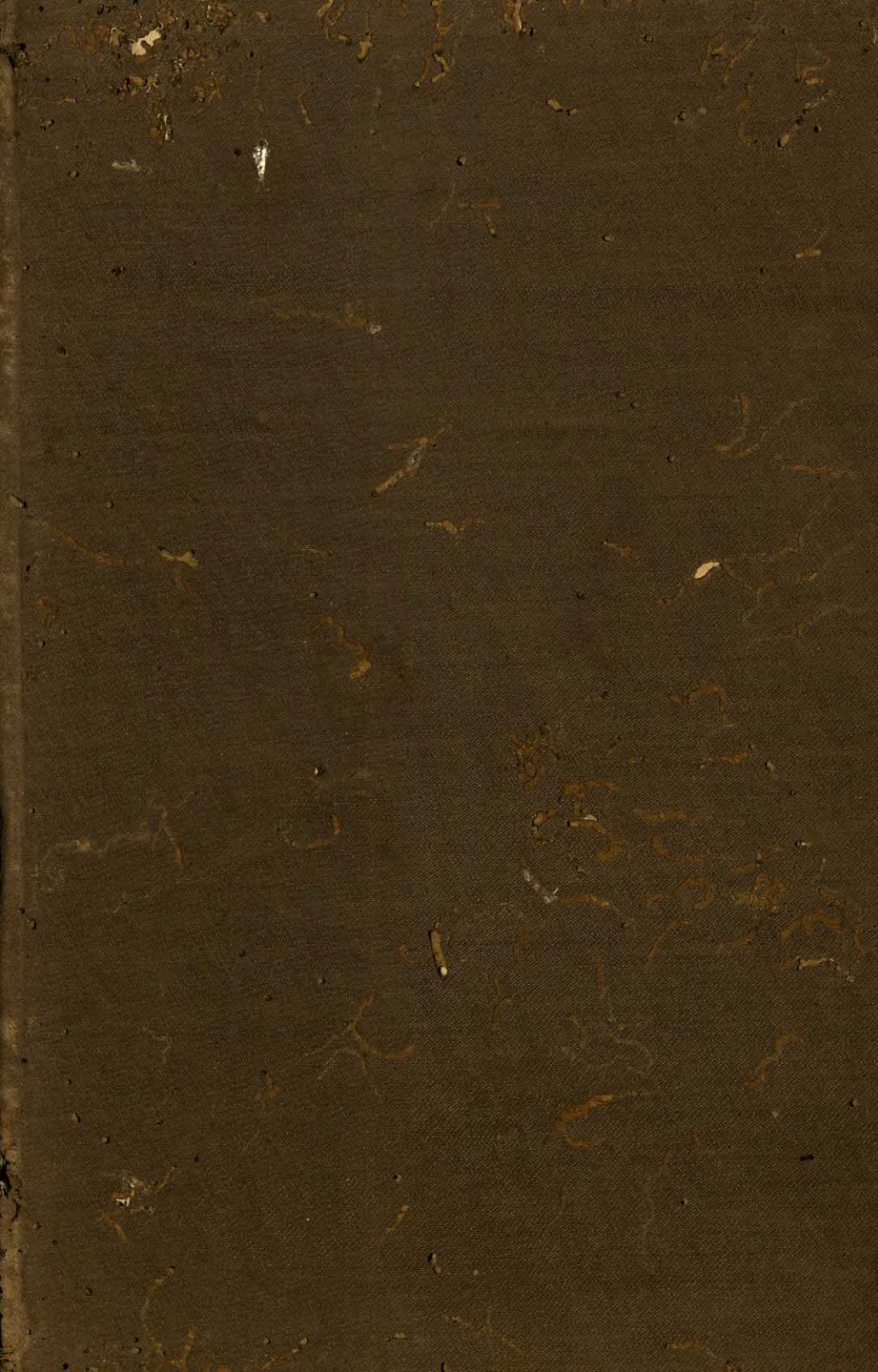






AREA (in thousand sq. miles)	
POPULATION (in millions)	
CAPITAL CITY	
STATE BOUNDARY	

INDIA

POLITICAL

ENGLISH MILES

0 50 100 150 200 250 300

37-05



12-61

PUNJAB

10-6



93

HIMACHAL
PRADESH

57



91

DELHI

VINDHYA
PRADESH

24-61



35

UPRADESH

107-14

Lucknow



55-49

Rewa

Patna

BIHAR

69-74



36-34

MADHYA PRADESH

6



81

ORISSA

52-19



8-72

Cuttack

Calcutta

WEST BENGAL

29-06



21-83

W. BENGAL

Shillong

50-29



7-47

ASSAM

Manipur

8-62



51

MANIPUR

4-04



51

TRIPURA

BAY OF BENGAL



Port Blair

ANDAMAN &

NICOBAR ISLANDS

3-14



33

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133

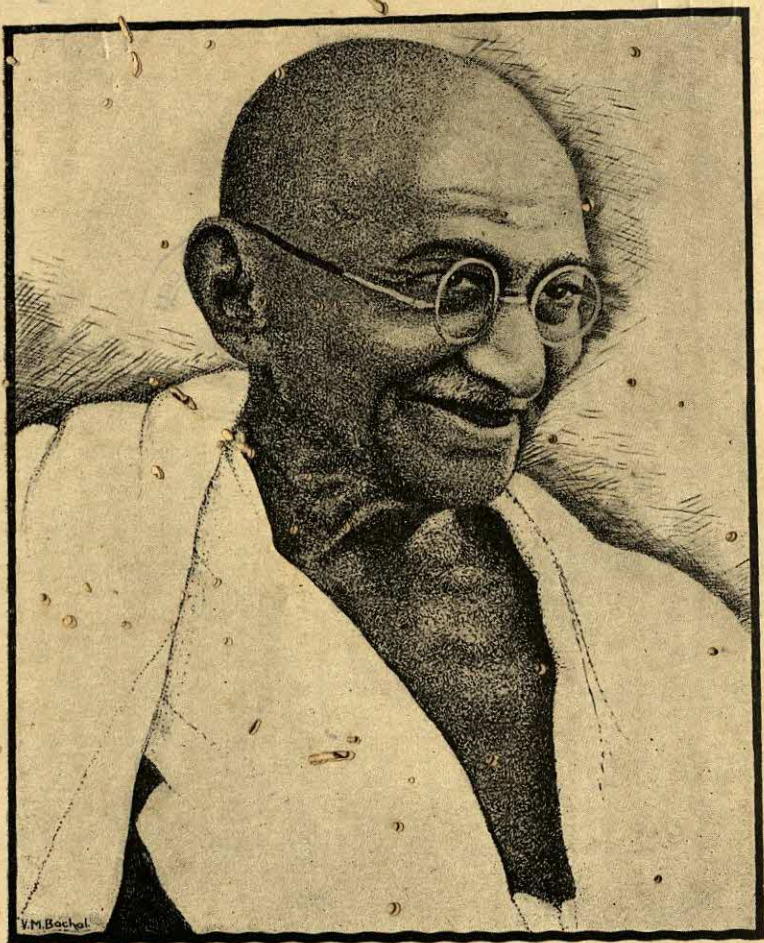
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73



677



MAHATMA GANDHI
Greatest of Modern Indians.

THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA

(FROM A.D. 1526 TO THE PRESENT DAY)

By

S. R. SHARMA, M.A.,

Professor of History, Fergusson College, Poona.



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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

4182



To

THE MAKERS OF MODERN INDIA
RECOGNISED AND UNRECOGNISED

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The Mughal Empire in India
The Crescent in India
Maratha History Re-examined
A Brief Survey of Human History
Ancient Indian History and Culture
Our Heritage and Its Significance
Shivaji
Jainism and Karnatak Culture

TO
THE MAKERS OF MODERN INDIA
RECOGNISED AND UNRECOGNISED

PREFACE

THE function of a preface is to introduce the book. For obvious reasons the author may not be the best person to write it. He might either overstate his claims, mistaking his intention for the performance; or be too apologetic out of sheer diffidence. I shall try and avoid both these extremes to the extent humanly possible.

Without pride or presumption I may state that this book has grown out of a teaching experience of well nigh two decades. It is the natural culmination of my earlier studies, viz. *The Mughal Empire in India* and *Maratha History Re-examined*. The method followed therein was analytical and topical rather than merely chronological and narrative. That having been found helpful for an intelligent appreciation of the subject has been adopted here also, and more systematically. A glance at the detailed table of contents will reveal the advantages of the scheme better than any theoretical exposition of it here. Forces, trends and factors in the making of modern India have been stressed rather than biographical details.

I have aimed more at clarity of presentation than fullness of detail. Care, however, has been taken to see that the information given is at once adequate and authentic. Additional reading has been suggested at the end of each chapter to extend the reader's horizons as well as to test the facts and comments in the text.

The bibliography also shows the extent of my obligations to the works cited therein. I hereby gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to them in the preparation of this volume.

This is essentially a book written by a teacher for students of 'Modern India' which is a subject prescribed in several Universities. I am, however, hopeful that it may not fail also to evoke the interest of the general reader and help him to a substantial and correct understanding of how India came to be what she is to-day, as the result of a historical process that started four centuries and a quarter ago.

I am thankful to my publishers for the care taken by them to help me over avoidable pitfalls in the presentation of this complex and none too easy subject. Nevertheless, I have ventured to express my views unequivocally, even on highly controversial issues, believing that to be the best way of doing justice to the subject, to my readers, and to myself. Other views may be found in the Supplementary Reading suggested at the end of each chapter. The reader

is thus enabled to arrive at his own independent judgment on men and matters without being misled by the 'dogmatism' of the present writer.

The portrait sketches of Akbar, Shivaji, Ripon and Mahatma Gandhi (each presenting the best in his own epoch) are by my talented pupil Sri V. M. Bachal of the First Year Arts Class.

All the maps in the text of this book are based on the maps in Charles Joppen's *Historical Atlas of India*.

Acknowledgement is due to the Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, for permission to reproduce the Political Map of India from *India in Maps*, printed on the front end paper.

Some of the more important dates have been given in the Index for convenience of reference.

Poona,

31st March 1953.

S. R. S.

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INTRODUCTION

1. *The Making of Modern India.* 2. *Territorial Extent.* 3. *Political Organisation.* 4. *Defence Mechanism.* 5. *General Progress.*

1. *The Making of Modern India*

MODERN INDIA is not an easy expression to define; yet it is not so very difficult to understand either. In order to comprehend its reality correctly, it is necessary to grasp a few fundamental facts.

India is a land of apparent diversities; but she has also a basic unity. This unity is firstly geographical, and secondly cultural. The country enclosed between the Himalayas in the North and the two arms of the Indian Ocean—the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea—in the East, South and West, has a distinctive identity, in spite of the infinite variety of soil and climate within. She forms the natural homeland of her superficially diversified population. Drawn from the surrounding ethnological regions, the people of India today answer to several racial traits in their physical appearance, and profess religions ranging between primitive Shamanism, Aryo-Dravidian Hinduism and Semitic Islam—not to speak of smaller minorities like the Christians, the Parsis and the Hebrews. But culturally they all share an individuality of temperament and character which is palpably *Indian*. This has been the product of historical forces now reaching over five thousand years. Nevertheless, the political unity of India is a modern achievement.*

Nationalism, which is, again, a modern phenomenon with its political, economic and cultural implications, is very active in India today. It is illustrative of the extent to which India has been drawn into the currents of modern life. She thinks no longer in terms of isolation; she feels, and that, too, intensely, that her rich historical heritage entitles her to a leading role in Asian and world movements. Her newly achieved status of independence has galvanised her life as nothing else did in the past. But in order to make this aspiration a reality, India has much to achieve by way of modernising herself. Nationalism has thus a dual function: (i) to emphasise cultural individuality and national self-respect; and (ii) to acquire qualities which make for efficiency in the struggle for

* Under Asoka, Ala-ud-din Khalji and Aurangzeb, such political unity had been attempted but was not permanently attained.

existence in the world context. The former represents the ancient Self of the people; the latter provides the modern milieu in which that ancient Self seeks to survive. Modern India aims at harmonising these two tendencies. Indeed, she has been trying to do this ever since the Europeans came to her shores over the western sea-routes, and the Mughals entered her territory through her north-western gateways. That these two streams of foreign influence poured into the ocean of Indian life almost simultaneously is seldom remembered; yet that was a very significant happening in our history.

The Portuguese Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in A.D. 1498 and Babur won his epoch making victory on the field of Panipat in A.D. 1526. Unconnected as these two events might appear, they were fraught with equally momentous consequences to the future of India. It is to be noted that it was the triumph of the Turks at Constantinople in A.D. 1453 that drove the Christian Europeans to seek new routes to the East (particularly India), and made Columbus stumble on a new continent in A.D. 1492, while he was groping after India. Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, was a Turk, too, being fifth in direct descent from Timur in the male line. The Christians who were diverted by the Turks in the 'Near East', were thus confronted by their cousins in the real India of their search—the El Dorado or 'land of gold' that attracted the Mughal and the European alike. Both came in order to exploit the fabulous wealth of India; both, in turn, subjugated India and ruled over her for considerable periods of time. But while the Mughal was ultimately absorbed by India, the European remained a foreigner, with the consequences we shall be studying in the latter part of this history. In one respect, however, European and Mughal unconsciously joined hands; for each in his own way led India to become more modern than he found her. The role of the Mughal in this process may not be so obvious as that of the European, but it was not less important.

Modern India is the resultant of several historical influences. The most outstanding among these is her contact with the Europeans: political, social, economic and cultural. But this contact has been so fruitful precisely because of the progress made by India when the Europeans first appeared on the scene. An important part of that advancement was due to the Mughals. The Portuguese were established in Goa in 1510, and had close relations with Vijayanagar and the Deccan States long before the Mughals were firmly settled in this country. Yet, except in missionary enterprise, their influence was negligible.

The barrenness of the Portuguese contact was largely due to the decadence of the Iberians. Even in Europe, the Spaniards and the Portuguese were worsted by the Dutch, the French and the English in all walks of life. Had they succeeded in India, instead of their northern rivals, we should have still continued to be more medieval than modern. On our side, had Vijayanagar, instead of the Mughals, prospered and dominated over India, despite her admitted glory, the consequence could not have been different. For Vijayanagar at her best did not show any potentialities for modernism. Apart from her policy of religious toleration, she was and remained medieval; that is why she disappeared. The battle of Talikota in 1565 was as much a verdict against medievalism as were the first two (or even the third) battles of Panipat—judging from ultimate results. The triumph of the Mughals was, therefore, on the whole, better calculated to prepare India for her modern role or destiny.

What, then, were the modern features of the Mughals? Why should we commence our history of Modern India with the advent of the Mughals, rather than with the first decisive victories of the English East India Company? Why begin with the First Battle of Panipat (1526), instead of with Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764)? One important reason is that the English never became Indian in the sense in which the Mughals were nationalised. They chose to remain foreigners, and their period or regime in India, therefore, is more an aspect of British history abroad, than a continuation of Indian history. India, i.e., national India, remained for long conquered and suppressed. She lay dormant or frustrated until her recent reawakening. This is not to overlook British contributions to the Indian Renaissance which we shall assess later. Meanwhile, we must pick up the thread of Indian history from the moment when it emerged from an essentially medieval into the modern phase without ceasing to be Indian. With the First Battle of Panipat we touch that point.

The Mughals were incipient of potential moderns; they did for India what the Tudors—their contemporaries—did for England. The Modern Age was yet to dawn over England, in the full sense of the term, in the time of the Tudors; it came, first of all, with the triumph of Parliament over the Stuart monarchy in the seventeenth century; secondly, it came with the Industrial Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century. Yet, for good reasons, most writers commence the history of Modern England with the Tudors. In the first place, Babur's victory over Ibrahim Lodi, like that of Henry Tudor at Bosworth in 1485, was a

triumph of fire-arms over medieval archery; of something like scientific warfare over foolhardy masses of men who were ill-organised. Secondly, Mughal administration, in its heyday, was also modern as compared with its predecessors; its revenue system was more scientific, and its bureaucracy better organised, than any that existed in India before. Thirdly, even as the Tudors gave England an international status, the Mughals, too, placed India on the map of the modern world. Fourthly, their contributions to the art of living luxuriously rivalled, if they did not surpass, those of Louis XIV of France who was a contemporary of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Lastly, in their enlightened rule, the Mughals did not compare ill with the benevolent despots of a century later in Europe; while in the matter of religious toleration, Akbar was a shining contrast to the Bourbons and Tudors alike. Indeed, Akbar was the forerunner of Renascent India in several respects.

Even if the advent of the Europeans and, more especially, the activities of the English East India Company, are to be taken as the proper starting point for a history of Modern India, it is not to be forgotten that the E.I.C. was inaugurated on the last day of the sixteenth century when Akbar's rule was at its zenith. Since the English traders were attracted to India by the reputation of the 'Grand Mogor' whose patronage they assiduously sought, but ultimately superseded, it is the more necessary to study the circumstances under which they thrived. Sir Thomas Roe was a suppliant at the court of Jahangir in 1615; the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II became a prisoner of the East India Company in 1858! The key to the understanding of this metamorphosis is to be found only in a careful study of the fortunes and misfortunes of the Mughal Empire (1526-1858).

The revolution of 1857-58 was an event of extraordinary importance in the making of Modern India: (i) it drove the last nail into the coffin of the Mughal Empire, (ii) it laid to dust the last hope of a Maratha revival; (iii) it also buried the East India Company as ruler of India. By this triple revolution, the feet of India were firmly set on the road to becoming a modern nation. Of these three entities, the role of the first has been indicated in the foregoing pages; that of the second and the third needs to be elucidated.

The rise of the Maratha power, during the seventeenth century, will be dealt with more fully in due course. Its founder Shivaji (1630-80) was a contemporary of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. He gave a mortal blow to the southward expansion of the Mughal Empire over the Deccan

and peninsular India. Under the Peshwas and their Maratha co-adjutors, in the course of the eighteenth century, the Marathas virtually dominated the whole of India. They succeeded in making the Mughal Emperor a puppet in their hands. This *de facto* suzerainty entailed on them the dual responsibility of looking after the government as well as the protection of a large part of the country. The Marathas failed in both these respects, but succeeded only in antagonising their rivals: the Nizam, the Nawabs of Oudh and Bengal, Haidar Ali and Tippu Sultan, and the English. The English derived the largest benefits out of these antagonisms and rivalries. The outcome was that the tragedy of the Mughals was more quickly enacted in the case of the Marathas, so far as their bid for national supremacy was concerned. The survival of a few remnants of political authority—e.g., in Kolhapur, Baroda, Indore and Gwalior—like that of the Nizam (the only survivor of the once supreme Mughal Empire), had little national significance. With the single exception of Baroda (which, under the late Sayaji Rao Gaekwar, anticipated much modern reform) the Maratha and other States but tardily participated in the advancement of Modern India.* But modernism has come to stay in India, and its compelling influence is being felt increasingly even in the States,—i.e., among such of them as have survived the avalanche of mergers.

What was the specific role of the English in the making of Modern India? To begin with, it was negative: *viz.*, that of destroying the remnants of the Mughal Empire which had once served as a constructive force, but now merely encumbered as *debris*. The Marathas, too, had a golden opportunity, but they did not rise equal to it. Hence, the Maker of India's Destiny called forth, as it were, a remote Western people to set them aside, and placed the English at the helm. They came as traders, but remained to rule. Nevertheless, as a body of merchants, they, too, proved incompetent to discharge satisfactorily this onerous responsibility. They had acquired an empire, appointed governors, maintained armies and collected revenues, while yet they were subjects of the British Crown and Parliament. The Regulating and Charter Acts, commencing from 1773, failed to regulate effectively. It was necessary to control the powers of misgovernment, no less than the appropriation of the profits of that government which were flowing into the coffers of a section of the British people. Both these problems agitated the nation at home. Consequently, the

* Outside the Maratha States, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin showed progressive trends.

sanguinary happenings of 1857 in India, were judged sufficient ground for the final assumption of total sovereignty by the Crown. That was a momentous decision in the making of Modern India.

The East India Company had, no doubt, under Parliamentary inspiration, adopted some salutary measures for the 'good government' of India. The suppression of *Thagi*, the prohibition of *Sati*, and the introduction of Occidental education, were all calculated to modernise India. The railways and telegraphs, too, were powerful instruments in the creation of modern conditions. Other changes followed as a matter of course. But these were alien innovations, and constituted the spoon-feeding of an entire nation. That could not be carried on for ever, in the nature of things. The mere increase of the dosage could not satisfy India which was fast coming of age—i.e. politically speaking, and in the modern way. Macaulay's prophecy came true—sooner, perhaps, than was expected or wished for. India has now come into her own as an independent country.

2. Territorial Extent

Modern States depend, for their security and stability, upon firm natural boundaries. The tragedy of Poland, for example, has been due to the lack of such frontiers. The natural boundaries of India are luckily defined by geography. Though in the time of Asoka, the Maurya Empire extended, in the North-West, as far as the Hindu Kush, and a Hindu dynasty ruled over Kabul until it was overthrown by the Ghaznavids, Modern India has, acknowledging the lessons of history, accepted her present* frontier on the North-West. It includes Baluchistan, the N.W. Frontier Province reaching up to Kashmir, with a zigzag tribal zone separating India from Afghanistan. Beyond Kashmir is Russian territory. Our neighbours on the North-West are Iran (or Persia), Afghanistan and Russia. To the North, in the Himalayan region, are Nepal and Tibet, with Sikkim and Bhutan east of Nepal. Assam and East Bengal, with Manipur between them, divide us from China and Burma. On all other sides we are encircled by the sea which is subject to international regulation.

Burma was administered from India since her annexation by the British in 1886 (with Arakan and Tenasserim since 1826, and Pegu from 1852). She was separated from India by the Act of 1935. The Andaman and Nicobar

* The present political partition of India into the Indian Union and Pakistan does not alter the fundamental geographical position of the entity known to history as INDIA.

Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, whose strategic importance was forcibly brought home to us by the Japanese during World War II, are within the jurisdiction of India. Though Ceylon is ethnically and culturally akin to this country, and geographically very close to us, she was rarely ruled from India. The Dutch held her ports for 138 years, until 1796, when Ceylon was conquered by the British. After 1798 she was a Crown Colony of Great Britain. On the contrary, Aden which is far removed from India (at the entrance to the Red Sea), remained, politically, an Indian outpost until recently (1935).

This vast expanse of territory, covering 15,81,410 sq. miles, was never subject to a single jurisdiction before. In the time of Asoka, the Empire was about as big; and under Ala-ud-din Khalji and Aurangzeb the suzerainty of Delhi extended over nearly the whole country. But that was only for short periods, and their authority was never so effective or well-integrated as it came to be under the British aegis. Besides, the modern Indian provinces, and some of the Indian States (ruled by princes), are large enough to be governed independently. It is, therefore, of unique interest to learn how such a vast sub-continent came to be politically integrated.

3. Political Organisation

The present political set-up of India has a long history. The eternal quest of India has been the realisation of 'Unity in the midst of diversity'. India, apart from her size, has been a land of ethnic diversities, owing to several immigrations. The last of them, as well as the most important in its consequences to Modern India, was that of the Muslims. The Mughals constituted their last notable division. Indian society, before the advent of the Muslims, had shown great powers of assimilation, racial and cultural. Yet it was not able to absorb the Muslims totally as it did, for instance, the Scythians and the Greeks. The result was a long-drawn struggle. It started with the Arab conquest of Sind and Multan in the eighth century A.D.; and it went on till the sixteenth century, when the Mughals appeared. The political genius of the Mughal Emperors, particularly Akbar, appeared to suggest a solvent.

Akbar went one better than all his predecessors, Hindu as well as Muslim. With the tolerance of Asoka and the ambition of Samudragupta, he combined the pragmatism of Ala-ud-din Khalji with the flair for innovation that Muhammad Tughlaq had displayed. Altogether, he proved an unrivalled nation-builder. He created a political system in which Hindus and Muslims were assigned

equality of status; careers were thrown open to talent, perhaps for the first time in India, and to a large extent without reference to race, religion or family. The conqueror became an Indian; the conquered were treated with respect and dignity. Thus, a Man Singh could become governor of Kabul, and a Todar Mall reveal his genius for fiscal organisation. No office was denied to an Indian because he belonged to the subject race. Hindus and Muslims fought and served under Akbar, forgetting their old animosities.

Though this tolerant spirit did not endure—in fact it was reversed—in the time of Aurangzeb, the general efficiency of the system continued. The secret of this administrative success lay partly in the personality of the emperors themselves—from Akbar to Aurangzeb—during one hundred and fifty years (1557-1707); and partly in the systematic character of the entire organisation. Its main framework had been created by the Afghan Sher Shah; Akbar perfected it in the spirit of a great statesman, and with meticulous attention to detail. A degree of standardisation was attained that came very near to the 'rule of law' which is a modern characteristic. Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb were equally painstaking in matters of State business. This personal attention, on the part of the great emperors, imparted to the whole structure a character that survived the neglect of their incompetent successors. So long did that system endure that Warren Hastings, recommending the publication of Abul Fazl's *Ain-e-Akbari* to the Directors of the East India Company, stated in a dispatch: "It will serve to assist the judgment of the Court of Directors on many points of importance to the interest of the Company. It will show where the measures of their administration approach the first principles, which, perhaps, will be found superior to any that have been built on their ruins, and certainly most easy, as the *most familiar to the minds of the people*, and when any deviation from them may be likely to counteract or to assimilate with them."

The eminent historian of Aurangzeb and his times, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, has also pointed out: "The two hundred years of Mughal rule..... gave to the whole of northern India, and to much of the Deccan also, oneness of official language, official system and coinage, and also a popular *lingua franca* for all classes except the Hindu priests and the stationary village folk. Even outside the territory directly administered by the Mughal Emperors, their administrative system, official titles, court etiquette, and monetary type were borrowed, more or less, by the neighbouring Hindu rajahs."

The standards thus set up by the Mughals were equally well acknowledged and appraised in the *Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform* (1933-34) in the following terms: "The arts of government and administration were not indeed unknown to the earlier Hindu kings, and the strong hand of the Mughal Emperors who reigned between 1526 and 1707 maintained a State which ultimately embraced the larger part of India and did not suffer by comparison with, if it did not even surpass in splendour, the contemporary monarchy in Europe."

It is, however, obvious that, in spite of its notable qualities, the political organisation of the Mughal Empire suffered from certain defects and drawbacks which brought about its downfall. In the first place, it was a system created by the emperors and hence rooted in their character. With the deterioration of the pivot, the structure too was shaken to its foundations. Considering that it was a purely monarchical system of the old type, it is a wonder that it survived so long. Secondly, no centralised government, which is not broad-based on democratic principles and machinery, can last. Benevolence, no doubt, is a saving quality: 'It is twice blest: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes!' It is the only saviour of autocratic governments. The Mughal monarchy was no exception. It failed miserably when it shed its enlightenment and retained only its autocracy. Finally, it proved too weak, even to be autocratic. Feudal anarchy, which the great emperors, from Akbar to Aurangzeb, had held in leash, broke loose under their effeminate successors. Pampered princes could not sustain a stable and efficient government. So passed away the Grand Monarchy of India when it did not possess the power to support even its grandeur.

The only Indian power which had the chance to step into the shoes of the imperial Mughals, was that of the Marathas. Unfortunately, that race, after the death of Shivaji, produced no political genius of the order of nation-builders. Except in their home provinces, the best of the Peshwas proved to be mere conquerors, with no constructive capacity to build up a new India, or even to prop up or resuscitate a falling Empire. Their political system was too narrow to make a great nation; too selfish even to support the Maratha 'Confederacy'. Those who boasted of being 'king-makers' and of having victoriously crossed the Indian frontier at Attok, were too short-sighted to see beyond their noses. They challenged enemies whom they could not defeat, mistook intrigue for diplomacy, and met with a disaster in which they found few to sympathise with them. A State could no

more rest on mere blackmail than on mere grandeur.

By then, the English, through a marvellous series of happenings, had arrived at a situation from which they could derive the greatest benefits. Hence, an English dominion grew up out of the wrecks of two Indian Empires: one actual (the Mughal) and the other potential (the Maratha). India was not conquered by the British as by Babur or Baji Rao I. She fell to them piecemeal; and their appetite grew with what it fed on. This was not altogether in a fit of political somnambulism, as Seeley suggested; nor was it the outcome of a deliberate plan of conquest carried out stage by stage. In the struggle for survival, they acted, like their rivals, by the law of expediency. Their empiricism—cynical at times in its political realism—was guided, in the earlier stages, by the instinct of traders for profits. It was only gradually that the consciousness of political opportunity and responsibility dawned upon them. The awakening of a moral conscience came later; but it did come. This was due to the essential soundness of the English position at home.

Monarchy had been found at its best and worst in India; but limited monarchy, such as England evolved, was a novelty. When the East India Company was launched on its career of destiny, England was still under the Tudor dictatorship. Then came the historic struggle between the autocratic Stuarts and their militant parliaments, resulting in the Civil War, the Restoration, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Up to this time, Aurangzeb was still in the plenitude of his power; nay, since the death of Shivaji (1680), the Mughal Empire was looking forward to expansion over the entire peninsula. But disruption came sooner than was expected. The Marathas crept into the Mughal Empire much like the Teutons into the Roman Empire. The East India Company inherited a role analogous to that of the political Popes who became *de facto* sovereigns without being kings. However, its suppression by the British Crown created a record better than that of the Holy Roman Emperors of Europe; while the latter perpetuated autocracy in Europe, the former made for democracy in India.

The first phase of the East India Company's regime ended with the Regulating Act of 1773. For the first time, that politically irresponsible body of traders was brought under the sovereign control of the British Parliament. The Charter Act of 1833 was of greater importance. It unified the entire administration of India under the Governor-General and his Council; the legislative independence of the Presidencies was ended; and the benevolent

objectives of the rulers were clearly enunciated. Codification of Indian laws was aimed at, with "due regard to the rights, feelings, and peculiar usages of the people." Section 87 of the Charter Act stated: "No native of the said territories, nor any natural-born Subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any Place, Office, or Employment under the said Company." The Report of the Parliamentary Committee went even farther: "It is recognised as an indisputable principle", it declared, "that the interests of the Native Subjects are to be consulted in preference to those of the Europeans, whenever the two come in competition." Though the fulfilment of these sentiments and declarations was delayed by over a century, the trend towards their "progressive realisation" was ensured by the elimination of the Company and the assumption of complete sovereignty by the British Crown in 1858.

The liberalism reflected in the above policy was a part of the change that had come over England. The Age of Reform was ushered in by the Reform Act of 1832. The Queen's Proclamation to the Princes and Peoples of India (1858) was but a reaffirmation of the principles underlying the Charter Act of 1833. The history of the century following this is a record of the slow but steady implementation of that policy. Successive (Government of India) Reform Acts have now culminated in the complete restoration of Indian independence.

4. Defence Mechanism

The crucial test of independence is the capacity to retain it. India lost her independence every time her defence system broke down. The army is, therefore, the backbone of the State. Its main function is to protect the country from external attack. Secondly, it is also the ultimate sanction behind the sovereign authority of Government, even in internal matters. In this respect, the army reinforces the police forces in the maintenance of 'law and order' during moments of emergency. Laws promulgated by Government will have no meaning if they cannot be enforced; and this cannot be done effectively without the loyal support of the police and military forces. However, these very forces are capable of being misused; then they become instruments of tyranny. In order to prevent this, it is absolutely necessary that these instruments of coercion should be under civil control. This is what is done in all democratic States.

Another vital condition of the defence organisation is

that its personnel should be national. That is, the army and the police forces should not be manned by mercenaries having no stake in the country. Under foreign rule the army is dominated by extraneous interests: it is officered by foreigners, and the key-appointments are held by them. If true democracy does not exist, this might happen even under a native regime.

The history of India provides instructive illustration of what ought to be avoided if we are to retain our freedom and independence. The Mughal armies were mostly mercenary, even when they were largely recruited from among the natives of India. The loyalty of the troops was not rooted in patriotic sentiments. Under the Marathas, they were fired by a love of independence, during the first phase of their history. Later on, they lost this noble impulse, and served only for the sake of lucre. A sense of personal rivalry dominated the divided leadership. Even aliens were enrolled to secure selfish ends. Under the British, most of the medieval features were removed: troops ceased to be feudal levies; they were effectively controlled by their paymasters who enforced a rigorous discipline; the whole army was brought under a unified authority; loyalty was no longer merely personal, but subject to the overriding claims of the Government. Yet with all these improvements, the so-called 'Indian army' was not *national*, because it obeyed other than the 'national will'. It could be used, and was actually used, to serve foreign and imperial interests. Nay, it could be used, and it was used, against Indians themselves, to suppress national risings. It was, therefore, modernised only in the mechanical or technical sense; it was not modern in the sense of being *national*.

The problem of India today is to maintain both these *desiderata*: of being modern in equipment, discipline and efficiency, as well as modern in loyalty to the country and nation above all other considerations. Modern India has to guard against communal and sectional loyalties, no less than to see that the unified political control of the civil authority is never jeopardised by the armed forces.

India is one of the best fortified countries of the world, so far as natural defences are concerned. Her physical barriers—maritime and mountain—are among the most covetable. The sea frontiers, nevertheless, need to be strengthened by the creation of coastal defences at vulnerable and strategic points, and the fortification of all islands which are within Indian waters, like the Laccadiv and Maladiv, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Ceylon and India will be acting in their best mutual interests if they

enter into a co-operative or common defence system. Likewise, a friendly Burma would constitute the best eastern bulwark of India; while similar relations with Pakistan and the frontier tribes of the North-West should make for greater security in those regions. Our man-power is as great as our material resources are vast; but our moral assets are the richest of all. India has never been an aggressive country; she has been, on the contrary, a fellow-sufferer from the aggressions of others. She enjoys the goodwill of all Asian countries, which is the best part of her defence system. Pandit Nehru appropriately described the first Asian Relations Conference, which met in Delhi in April 1947, as "a landmark in the history of Asia, dividing one era from another," and observed: "Because it has been that landmark in the history of Asia, it is a landmark in the history of the world." India lives with faith in her peaceful neighbours; but she must also 'keep her powder dry'.

5. General Progress

'Progress' is an ever changing concept. In our present context we understand by it the transformation that has come over India since the advent of the Mughals and the Europeans. From the foregoing pages it must have become clear that both these peoples, coming to India as foreigners, affected our destiny powerfully for good or ill. There was, no doubt, a time when India was the leader of Asia in civilisation. But 'there is a tide in the affairs of men' as well as of nations. It cannot be claimed that India occupied a very high place on the eve of the Mughal conquest. At any rate, North India did not. In the South, Vijayanagar was at the zenith of her glory under Krishna Deva Raya who was a contemporary of Babur. We shall assess the condition of India as a whole, at the time of Babur's invasion, in the next chapter. Suffice it here to note that, had India been united and progressive, she would not have fallen a prey to fresh foreign incursions. Both her spectacular conquest by the Mughals, and the unobtrusive commercial penetration by the Europeans opened up India to new forces, on the whole, conducive to progress.

Before the Turkish and European contacts, India lived practically in isolation, so far as the West was concerned. Her ancient intercourse with China and the East had enriched her materially, but her culture remained unaffected. The new impacts—of the Muslims and the Christians—were of a different order. The former appeared to come as predators, yet remained to become Indians, thereby enriching the country and her civilisation in

several ways. The latter came ostensibly for trade, but remained to become foreign masters, impoverishing the people materially, though they helped in other respects to modernise India. The total result has been neither an unmixed blessing nor an unmitigated curse. The extent of the good and evil can be determined only after a very careful study of the history of India from the sixteenth century to the present day, from all points of view.

In order to be more definite, we shall concentrate upon three main aspects: (i) Political unity; (ii) Economic welfare; and (iii) Cultural results. From the first angle, we shall trace the stages or phases of the rise, growth and dissolution of three Supremacies in succession: viz. the Mughal, the Maratha, and the British. Secondly, we shall assess the economic effects of the domination of each of these powers, as they appeared in history. Thirdly, we shall take note of their cultural reactions, from time to time. In the last section, we shall close with a brief review of Modern India, under National Supremacy, from the point of view of our new and independent status.

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PART ONE MUGHAL SUPREMACY

CHAPTER I ANTECEDENTS

1. Asian Background. 2. European Pioneers. 3. Political Disintegration. 4. Economic Prosperity. 5. Cultural Trends.

1. Asian Background

THE UNITY of our interdependent world has come to be realised more and more in recent times. But a closer reading of the history of earlier ages, too, reveals unexpected links between peoples and lands apparently far removed from one another. In this view, India is seen at once as an integral part of Asia, instead of being isolated. Her intercourse with China and South-East Asia has been both rich and ancient. This was carried on from times immemorial over the seas, *via* Ceylon and Java. The mountain passes in the North-West also provided a gateway not less frequently used. The Aryans entered India by this route; so did the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and the Scythians and other Central Asian tribes. They gave India famous monarchs like Menander and Kanishka, as well as influenced her ancient culture—particularly in the field of art. In medieval times, the Muslims, too, conquered this country pouring in through the North-Western passes. This last event has had more fateful consequences than any other impact from that region.

The first Muslims to come to India were the Arabs. Their peaceful penetration was followed by their conquest of Sind and Multan, in A.D. 711-13. But that proved abortive. The Turks who came nearly three centuries later, as is well known, succeeded in permanently establishing themselves in this ancient land. Between A.D. 1000 and 1026, Mahmud of Ghazni led no fewer than seventeen expeditions which paved the way, ultimately, for the foundation of a powerful Muslim Empire. From A.D. 1206 to the final extinction of the Mughal Empire in 1858, there was always a Muslim monarch ruling in Delhi.* During

* Hemu, Hindu general of the Lodis, proclaimed himself sovereign at Delhi in 1556, with the title of Raja Vikramajit; but his pretensions were exploded by his defeat and death at the hands of Akbar very soon.

this long period of six centuries and a half, the Afghans were in power only for a short while. The Lodis who were overthrown by Babur, in the first battle of Panipat (1526), and the Surs who interrupted the Mughal regime in the time of Humayun (1540-55), belonged to that race. Otherwise, perhaps with the solitary exception of the Saiyids (1412-50), the Sultans of Delhi were all Turks. The Mughals, popularly so named, were really Turks. Hence, it is both useful and necessary to know something of their antecedents.

The Turks belonged to the Mongolian race and were known to the Europeans by their generic name of Tartars or Tatars. The Manchus of China, the Mongols who lived to the north of Tibet, and the Turks who occupied the Caspian region—all belonged to this ethnic division. In course of time, their different branches, being widely separated from one another, came to display characteristics which served to distinguish each of them from the rest. The Mughals who conquered India were a combination of the Central Asian Mongols and the Caspian Turks. The former were nomadic and uncivilised, while the latter—originally living in pastoral tribes—showed greater aptitude for civilisation as they moved south from their desert homes into Asia Minor, Persia, and Afghanistan. There, they came into contact with settled communities and advanced civilisations which ultimately absorbed them. The Mongols were ferocious barbarians; the Turks were talented and energetic conquerors. Originally they were Shamanists and Buddhists, but later became converts to Islam. This also brought them under the cultural influences of Persia and Arabia. It was this peculiar amalgam—racial, religious and cultural—that the Mughals brought to India in the sixteenth century.

The different currents and characteristics represented in the above may be illustrated by reference to three outstanding personalities on the horizon of modern Indian history—understanding “modern Indian” in the light of our Introduction. These personalities were the Mongol Chenghiz Khan, the Turki Timur Lang, and the Mughal Babur. They are the links which powerfully remind us that India, in spite of the stupendous Himalayan barrier, is a part of Asia. Islam and the Turks have, thus, more than Christianity, emphasised the bond between India and the “Middle East”. The conquests of Chenghiz Khan and Timur covered that entire region, as well as extended farther East and West. Of Chenghiz Khan (A.D. 1155-1227) it is truly said that “when he marched with his horde, it was over degrees of latitude and longitude instead of

miles; cities in his path were obliterated, and rivers diverted from their courses; deserts were peopled with the fleeing and dying, and when he had passed, wolves and ravens often were the sole living things in once populous lands." In the reign of his famous grandson, Kubilai Khan (A.D. 1259-94), the Mongol dominions covered an area wider than any that had bowed to a single sovereign before. "He was the first to govern by peaceful means. The splendour of his court and the magnificence of his entourage easily surpassed that of any Western ruler."* He ruled from Syria and Hungary in the West to China and Malaya in the East.

The further history of Chenghiz Khan and his descendants is only of indirect interest to us. In the first place, the great conqueror had entered India in pursuit of Jalal-ud-din Mangabarni, the last Shah of Khvarazm or Khiva, in A.D. 1221. That was in the reign of Sultan Iltutmish. The Mongols at that time did not cross the Indus, nor had they become Muslims. They continued their inroads, however, until the days of Ala-ud-din Khalji, by which time they had been converted to Islam. They were then called "new Mussalmans", but they had not ceased to be "fiery sons of the devil." In A.D. 1307 they were butchered by Ghazi Malik Tughlaq (father of Muhammad bin Tughlaq) when they invaded the Punjab for the last time. Secondly, Timur and Babur—each in his own way—claimed family relationship with Chenghiz Khan.

Timur was born in Transoxiana, in A.D. 1336 in a junior branch of the Great Khan's family, as legend sought to establish. According to William Erskine, "he was the son of the Chief of the Birlas (or Barlas), a tribe of the purest Mongol origin, but the scattered individuals of which, from long residence in Turki countries, had become Turks in manners and language." He ascended the throne of Samarqand in 1369, and invaded India in 1398-99. Before his death in 1405, he had made himself master over the whole of South-West Asia (excluding Arabia) and created one of the greatest Empires of history—extending between the Dardanelles and Delhi. Babur was fifth in lineal descent from Timur on his father's side, and fourteenth from Chenghiz Khan on his mother's.

The vast Empire of Timur fell to pieces within a few years of his death. It was initially divided between his several sons. The third among them, Mirza Miran Shah, from whom Babur was descended, inherited Azerbaijan, Syria and Iraq. But he was killed in battle near Tabriz,

* *The Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. IV, p. 645.

fighting against Yusuf, the chief of a Turkoman horde. His eldest son, Sultan Muhammad, led an uneventful life, but was succeeded by Abu-Said—Babur's grandfather—who had a very adventurous career. His patron and cousin, Ulugh Beg Mirza, inheritor of the Grand Khanate, was celebrated for his scientific pursuits, particularly astronomy. Abu-Said occupied Samarqand and extended his kingdom over Khorasan, as far as Mekran and the Indus. However, he, too, died in an expedition to Iraq, and his extensive dominions were again divided among his various survivors. Babur's father, Umer Sheikh, was the fourth son of Abu-Said, and received for his share the small principality of Farghana or Andekan. Kabul and Ghazni were inherited by his younger brother, Ulugh Beg Mirza, while Khorasan fell to another scion of Timur's family.

Umer Sheikh was very ambitious and of a restless disposition. He carried on incessant warfare with his neighbours, including his own elder brother, Sultan Ahmed Mirza, who ruled over Samarqand and Bokhara. It was in the midst of these self-wrought troubles that Umer Sheikh died, suddenly, of a fall from his pigeon-house. He was at that time only thirty-eight years of age, and had been king for twenty-six years. Babur, too, inherited this troubled legacy while he was barely twelve summers old. The further history of Babur will be narrated in the next chapter.

2. *European Pioneers*

The contact between India and Europe did not commence with Vasco da Gama's landing at Calicut in May 1498. To recount only a few of the best known illustrations, Alexander the Great and Megasthenes were in this country in the fourth and the third centuries B.C. respectively. However, they had entered through the North-Western gateway. But there was intercourse between India and the West even by the sea route from very ancient times. Pliny, the Roman historian of the first century A.D., complained of the drain of Roman gold which was expended on Oriental luxuries, imported mainly from India. Roman coins have been found in abundance by archaeologists in South India; and ancient Tamil literature alludes to Romans settled in this country. In medieval times, the famous Venetian adventurer, Marco Polo, visited South India in A.D. 1298. He travelled to Japan by the land route across China, and came to India by sea via the Indian Archipelago. There were several others who reached this country more directly from the

West: e.g., the Venetian merchant Nicolo Conti was in Vijayanagar in 1420, and the Russian (Armenian) Nikitin at Bidar in 1470-74. Even then, they travelled through the "Middle East" mostly, and reached India in ships that sailed along the Arabian Sea coast. But the Portuguese rediscovery of India by a new route *via* the Cape of Good Hope, at the close of the fifteenth century, was fraught with far-reaching consequences, because that formed part of the revolutionary happenings in contemporary Europe. Thereafter, nations rather than individuals engross our interest.

The year A.D. 1453 was a great turning point in the history of Europe as well as the world. In that year the long-drawn struggle between the Muslim Turks and the Christian peoples of Europe terminated in the triumph of the former. Constantinople, which had been for centuries the eastern-most citadel of Christian and European civilisation, now became a Turkish stronghold. This enabled the Muslims to effectively block the path of the Europeans to the East over their ancient and customary highways of commerce. But European palates had been too long accustomed to the spices of the East—particularly Indian pepper and ginger—to reconcile themselves to the unsavoury meat so suddenly forced upon them by the victorious Turks. The discoveries of Columbus, Vasco da Gama and several others were the conspicuous first-fruits of this turn of the tide in Eastern Europe. Its deeper and far-reaching repercussions on the history and civilisation of Europe need not detain us here. Briefly, the Renaissance and the Reformation in Europe were stimulated, though not caused, by these happenings.

Whatever the cause of the Crusades in Europe, the first conflicts between the Portuguese and the Muslims in India were dictated by considerations of trade more than by religion. For the epoch-making discovery by Vasco da Gama resulted not only in enabling the Europeans to bypass the Turks in the Levant, but also in placing them in a position to strike effectively at the commercial prosperity of the Muslims. The entry of the Portuguese in Indian waters was not that of crusaders but of commercial rivals. By the diversion of the main trade-route to Europe, thus brought about, the Christian cities of Venice and Genoa suffered no less than the Muslim Egyptians and Arabs. The highway of commerce between the East and the West had now shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic sea-board. The far-reaching effects of this change cannot be overestimated. However, as the struggle became keener, old religious animosities entered into the fray

between Christian and Muslim, and the spirit of religious fanaticism, once quickened, went on its consuming course with fatal consequences to the future of Portuguese power in India. Similarly, the transition from a purely commercial to a political policy is reflected in the changing attitudes and motives of successive Portuguese governors sent over to India.

Vasco da Gama, the prince of Portuguese pioneers, made in all three voyages to this country. Of these, the first was mainly exploratory. On that occasion, he started from Belem near Lisbon on 8th July 1497 and arrived at a village eight miles from Calicut on 17th May 1498. On 29th August the same year da Gama set sail on his return voyage after visiting Cannanore. Though the Hindu Zamorin accorded him a cordial reception, it was clear to da Gama that the attitude of the Arab merchants of Malabar was anything but friendly towards the European interlopers. Thus, while the prospects of trade were inviting, the hostility of the Muslims was to be inevitably expected. This aspect of the situation was powerfully brought home to the Portuguese when Pedro Alvares Cabral (the discoverer of Brazil), their next captain, arrived at Calicut on 13th September 1500. This time the combined hostility of the Zamorin and the Muslim traders drove him to seek refuge, at first with the Raja of Cochin, and then at Cannanore. Within a few months Cabral was obliged to leave India. The most important gains from this venture were the discovery of Cochin as a better harbour for European vessels, and the knowledge that, in the Indian situation, one raja could be played off against another owing to their mutual antagonisms.

Vasco da Gama came again to Calicut on 29th October 1502, determined to compel the Zamorin, if possible, to oust the Muslims. That, however, the Zamorin refused to do; whereupon, da Gama indulged in acts of frightfulness for which the Portuguese were becoming increasingly notorious in India. Eventually, he returned to Lisbon on 1st September 1503. The repercussions which naturally followed brought to this country the greatest of the Portuguese Doms, viz., Affonso d'Albuquerque, on his first visit, in 1504. Though he could not accomplish much on that occasion, his experience and reading of the situation prepared him for the historic role he was called upon to play five years later, in 1509, when he was appointed Viceroy. In the meanwhile, the Portuguese government at home had decided upon a more determined policy regarding India. Instead of dispatching solitary captains to secure isolated footholds in the East, the time, they felt, had arrived when

they should send a Viceroy for a definite period of continuous stay (3 years), in order to organise and consolidate their gains. The first effective choice for that office fell on Francisco d'Almeida, in 1505. His policy was clearly enunciated by him in one of his letters to King Emmanuel, thus: "The greater the number of fortresses you hold, the weaker will be your power; let all your forces be on the sea; because, if we should not be powerful at sea (which may the Lord forbid) everything will at once be against us. . . . Let it be known for certain that, as long as you may be powerful at sea, you will hold India as yours; and if you do not possess this power, little will avail you a fortress on shore."

Albuquerque, when he succeeded Almeida, in 1509, adopted a more comprehensive policy. The character and results of this will be dealt with later. His greatest service to Portugal was the securing of three valuable key-positions in the East: viz., Goa (1510), Malacca (1511), and Ormuz (1515). He had, in addition, attempted to take Aden; its loss was due to the bungling or stupidity of his successor Lopo Soares. Goa is still in Portuguese hands to remind us of the beginnings of European enterprise in India. Albuquerque died on 6th December 1515. His successors did little of importance or interest to the present context. Vasco da Gama was appointed Viceroy at Goa in September 1524. He came to India for the third time, only to die in the same year on Christmas Day. He was buried in Cochin, but his remains were later carried to Portugal in 1538.

The Dutch were the next Europeans to reach Indian waters; but they did not double the Cape of Good Hope until 1595.

3. Political Disintegration

The implications of the external contacts—Asian and European—described in the foregoing pages, will become clearer in the light of the internal conditions of India during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, i.e., on the eve of Babur's conquest of this country.

The emergence of a New Order is heralded, invariably, by symptoms of decadence which mark dying systems before their disappearance. But such symptoms also conceal, at the same time, seeds of a new vitality from which revolutionary changes take their birth. In the political sphere, in Europe no less than in India, feudal chaos at its worst was an unmistakable indicator of the need for reconstruction. The century that followed the invasion of Timur (1398)—Babur's great ancestor—had all

the characteristics of such a transition. The unity towards which India appeared to be moving under the aegis of the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs, during the preceding century, had yielded place to anarchy. Political disintegration was writ large on the face of this country in the fifteenth century. Medieval India had no creative energy left—politically speaking—to bring about the necessary transformation. This was precisely the function which, in the first instance, Babur and his descendants were called upon to discharge. We shall witness, in the chapters immediately following, the manner in which the Mughals fulfilled their historic role, and the extent to which they succeeded. Meanwhile, we must survey the stage on which they were summoned to act.

The separation between South and North India during this period is the first striking feature we witness. Since the Muslims were firmly seated on the throne of Delhi (1206), they had crossed the Vindhya and attempted an extension of their dominion to the farthest extremity of the peninsula (1311). This had necessitated, in the conditions of that age, the shifting of the political capital of Muslim imperialism from Delhi to Daulatabad (1326-27). Nevertheless, the futility of holding South India by a northern power was brought home to the Tughlaqs, within ten years, when Vijayanagar was founded as an independent Hindu State in 1336. The establishment, in its wake, of the Bahmani Sultanate, in 1347, demonstrated that the revolt was not due to religion alone. The centrifugal tendencies of the age were accentuated by geography. These could not be completely overcome until the days of the British supremacy.

The second outstanding fact that impresses us is the dwindling of the authority of the Delhi Sultanate, even in North India. Its Empire which was, for nearly two centuries, co-extensive with Hindusthan, was now shared between several rivals who, together, paved the way for its total extinction or supersession by yet another wave of foreign invaders, viz., the Mughals. These fissiparous States were founded either by the recalcitrant governors of the central power or by independent adventurers. The absence of any recognised principle of succession (like primogeniture) made for instability from within; and distance from the controlling suzerain at the centre (Delhi) encouraged the tendency to revolt. Bengal in the east, and Sind in the west, were in a chronic state of rebellion even when they were nominally parts of the Empire; after Firuz Tughlaq, they became definitely independent. Kashmir on the northern frontier was conquered by the Muslims

only as late as 1339, and it was not annexed to Delhi until 1586, in the time of Akbar. Rājputana, under the leadership of Mewar (Chitor), retained its independence and even threatened to overwhelm the surrounding Muslim kingdoms of Delhi, Malwa, and Gujarat. The last two, together with Jaunpur, in the heart of Hindusthan, broke away from Delhi during the unsettlement created by the invasion of Timur (1398-9). East of Malwa stretched Gondwana which was the only part of Hindu India that had never been conquered or even overrun by the Muslims, until it was subdued by Akbar's general Asaf Khan in 1564. Orissa, too, remained an independent Hindu principality south of Bengal; though invaded more than once by Muslim armies, it had not been annexed by any Muslim power before Akbar. Such was the congeries of heterogeneous and self-centred States in North India that was called upon to face Babur, in 1526, under the precarious hegemony of the Lodis, whose Empire at its widest stretched from the Punjab in the west to Bihar in the east.

Turning to the south, Khandesh under the Faruqis constituted a buffer-state between three other Muslim kingdoms: Gujarat, Malwa, and Bahmāni. Apart from its being the hinterland, Khandesh was of unique importance, because it held within its borders the fortress of Asirgarh which looked the entrance into the Deccan. The territory immediately to the south of the rivers Tapti, Wainaganga and the Godavari, down to the main course of the Krishna substantially formed the Bahmani kingdom stretching from the Arabian Sea in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the east. Between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra was the 'fertile crescent' of the Raichur Doab which was the bone of contention between Bahmāni and its southern Hindu neighbour Vijayanagar during well-nigh two centuries. Few other tracts have been so much irrigated with the blood of Hindus and Muslims as this historic valley; yet it is a fact, often overlooked by historians, that the struggle between Vijayanagar and Bahmani (and its succession States), was political rather than religious. There were Hindus as well as Muslims—both mercenaries—in the armies that fought on either side; and both waged wars also with their co-religionists from a purely political impulse. The Portuguese, whose advent in India we have described already, constituted another portentous element that added to the centrifugal forces which were bringing about the political disintegration of India on the eve of the Mughal conquest. Though Vijayanagar was still in its heyday (under Krishna Deva Raya), when Babur invaded Hindusthan, Bahmani had already split up into five inde-

pendent principalities: (i) Berar under the Imadshahis (1484-1574); (ii) Bidar under the Baridshahis (1487-1619); (iii) Bijapur under the Adilshahis (1489-1686); (iv) Ahmadnagar under the Nizamshahis (1490-1637); and (v) Golkonda under the Qutbshahis (1512-1687).

The most important conclusion suggested by the above state of India is not that she was divided internally between the Hindus and the Muslims, but that she was politically weak on account of the absence of a strong central authority to defend her. When the Sultanate of Delhi was powerful enough, as it was, undoubtedly, up to the time of Firuz Tughlaq, it had proved its capacity to protect India, for nearly two centuries, even from the attacks of fierce barbarians like the Mongols. India was, even then, split up between the Hindus and the Muslims; but the supremacy of the Sultan of Delhi could not be effectively challenged by any power inside or outside the country. The invasion of Timur, at the close of the fourteenth century, revealed for the first time that India was no longer invulnerable. There was no power within the country which could recover that supremacy. Neither the Hindus nor the Muslims of India had the creative capacity of their forbears to achieve anything beyond provincial distinction. We, indeed, come across striking personalities like Firuz Shah Bahmani (1397-1422), Ibrahim Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur (1402-36), Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir (1420-70), Mahmud I of Malwa (1436-69), Mahmud Begarha of Gujarat (1458-1511), Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur (1490-1510), and Husain Shah of Bengal (1493-1518). They were all eminent Sultans—not merely in their own respective dynasties, but even when judged by more absolute standards. Yet the heart of Indian Muslim supremacy seemed to be palsied. No Indian Mussalman could rise to the eminence of a Balban, an Ala-ud-din Khalji or a Muhammad Tughlaq. The Hindus, too, could produce a Krishna Deva Raya and a Rana Sangram Simha; but no one of the calibre of a Chandragupta, or a Vikramaditya—not to speak of a Harsha or an Asoka.

The capacity of politically organised communities for survival depends upon several factors, including the non-political. In the first place, the character of the government is of primary importance; it should be both efficient and acceptable to the people. As we stated in the Introduction, this implies capacity for defence against internal, no less than external, forces of disruption. When civil strife became a recurring feature, as it did more and more in medieval India, it culminated in our national subjection to foreigners. What with palace intrigues and wars of succes-

sion, internal factions due to feudal divisions, and deadly animosities between the local and foreign parties, even among the otherwise homogeneous Muslims (as in the Bahmani kingdom, which led to the murder of Mahmud Gawan in 1481)—all alike contributed to the same result. Secondly, the military organisation, such as then obtained, with its feudal levies, mercenary and *ad hoc* armies equipped with outmoded arms, were ill-calculated to withstand superior forces such as the Portuguese and the Mughals now brought into India. Lastly, the administrative and social structures were too loose and unco-ordinated to supply the necessary cohesion in critical times. There was not much love lost between most of the monarchs and their subjects. Nevertheless, the economic and cultural heritage of the country contained much that was worthy of conservation and development.

4. Economic Prosperity

Under modern conditions it is impossible to be economically prosperous without political security and independence. But, paradoxical as it may seem, in medieval India, conditions were quite different. India continued to produce vast wealth in spite of the distractions and wars which marked her political disintegration. This was due to the fact that the economically productive classes were hereditarily professionalised, and politics were family affairs (supported by others who were mere consumers of the economic goods produced by the working classes). Most of the fighting was done by professional soldiers or other unproductive mercenary free lances. The ravages of war were far more restricted and localised by the very nature of the warfare of those times. It was, besides, an ancient tradition in this country, to leave the peasants, artisans, and craftsmen unmolested for the most part as their services were indispensable to all. The belligerents needed their supplies as much as the victors the articles of luxury they indulged in. And the country was so vast that there was room in it for abundant production which always kept away from or ahead of military destruction. Generally, war followed the route of cities and strategic fortresses, while industry confined itself largely to the security of the villages. The margin of prosperity thus left over in the country was big enough to allow for accumulation which was the main source of attraction to foreign invaders and traders alike. Only in Delhi and its vicinity, and the Punjab generally, war and politics took a heavier toll than, perhaps, in any other region. Kashmir in the extreme

north flourished all the same, ensconced in its mountain security.

Generalisations are unsafe with reference to a big country like India, even in modern times; much more will they be hazardous in respect of conditions obtaining before the unification and standardisation brought about by the Mughals. Apart from our knowledge of the plunder of India's wealth, which we obtain from the accounts of contemporary chroniclers from the time of Mahmud of Ghazni to the time of Babur, and the luxurious standards of living of the Princes and Sultans and their courtiers, of which, too, we have indubitable evidence, the testimony of numerous foreign travellers who sojourned in this land, from time to time and from province to province, enables us to draw a picture of India during the period of our present study, which may not be considered unreliable. Though a fuller account of this cannot be given here for want of space, we might mention the sources and provide a few illustrations.

Our first witness is a Chinese interpreter named Mauhan who was in Bengal in A.D. 1405. But the Venetian merchant Nicolo Conti who visited Vijayanagar together with his wife, in 1420, is better known. Equally famous is Abdur Razzak, the Persian ambassador of Timur's son Shah Rukh, to the court of the Zamorin of Calicut; he, too, was in Vijayanagar, in 1443, and travelled extensively over South India. Three decades later came the Russian Athanasius Nikitin (1470-74) who landed at Chaul, but made straight for the kingdom of Bidar. His observations are those of "an enterprising but uneducated man". In the wake of da Gama's discovery of India we have copious accounts of other European visitors like Duarte Barbosa (1504-14), Ludovico Varthema (1505-7), Domingo Paes (1522), and Fernao Nuniz (1535). They travelled mostly through South India, particularly Bijapur, Vijayanagar and the coastal towns of the west; but Barbosa visited Bengal as well. This is not an exhaustive catalogue, but it will serve our purpose here. We may supplement it with the glimpses we obtain from the writings of Babur and his contemporaries.

From much that is interesting it is difficult to make a brief selection. Yet there is no doubt that the impression created by a comparative study of their total testimony is one of general economic prosperity, taking the country as a whole. Nikitin, no doubt, observed: "The land is overstocked with people; but those in the country are very miserable, while the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury." But such a contrast is true also of

other countries and times, not excluding ours. Nearly two centuries earlier, the poet Amir Khusrau remarked: "Every pearl in the royal crown is but the crystallised drop of blood fallen from the tearful eyes of the poor peasant." Subject to this fundamental qualification, the volume of agricultural and industrial production, the enormous quantities of consumers' goods exported from this country, the large numbers of foreign merchants from Lisbon to Peking who flocked to our ports, and the amount of specie (silver and gold) that poured into India, alike betokened the existence of great wealth, though it was not equitably distributed.

According to Babur, "the abundance of gold and silver is the chief excellence of Hindusthan." Though gold coins were in circulation, prices were low in most parts of the country on account of abundance of production. Varthema refers to Bengal as "the cheapest place in the world to live in"; Nikitin writes about Calicut: "everything here is cheap." Paes describes Vijayanagar as "the best provided city in the world", and adds, after enumerating the commodities available at that place, "there is a large store of these and very cheap". At Cambay Barbosa found "every conceivable article of luxury" and "everything was good and cheap." He also speaks of the inhabitants as "a people of great culture, accustomed to good clothing, leading a luxurious life, given to pleasure and vice". In the "noble city of Cambay", according to him, "are many fair houses, very lofty with windows, and roofed with tiles in our manner, well laid out with streets and fine open places and great buildings of stone and mortar". Likewise, the Chettys of Malabar, he states, "live in spacious houses in their own appointed streets"; "the Guzarates of Cananor, Cochin and Calicut", also, had "great houses and streets of their own". Conti, too, alludes to "most sumptuous buildings, elegant habitations and handsome furniture". Lastly, Babur himself describes Chanderi (90 kos from Agra) in these terms: "The houses of all the inhabitants are of stone, and are beautiful and capacious. The houses of men of consequence are of hewn stone, wrought with great skill and labour. The houses of the lower rank are wholly of stone, generally not hewn. Instead of tiles, the houses are covered with flagstone." In his dominions, Babur states, "workmen of every profession and trade are innumerable and without end. For any work or any employment, there is always a set ready to whom the same employment and trade have descended from father to son for ages. In Agra alone (and of stone-cutters belonging to that place only), I every day employed on my palaces 680 persons; and in Agra, Sikri, Biana, Dhulpur, Gwalior,

Koila (Aligarh), there were every day employed on my work 1,491 stone-cutters. In the same way there are numberless artisans and workmen of every sort in Hindusthan."

This availability of skilled workers, it is interesting to note, is also corroborated by the European travellers. Nikitin, for example, speaks of Cambay as a "manufacturing place for every sort of goods as long gowns, damasks and blankets". Barbosa adds: "It is a great and fair city in which dwell substantial merchants and men of great fortune, both Moors and Heathen. There are also many craftsmen of mechanic trades in cunning work of many kinds as in Flanders." According to Varthema: "Calicut rivalled Cambay for the dignity of being the greatest port of India." At Srinagar in remote Kashmir, Mirza Haidar (Babur's cousin) noted: "There are many lofty buildings constructed of fresh cut pine. Most of these are at least five storeys high, and each storey contains apartments, halls, galleries, and towers.... The passages in the markets and streets of the city are all paved with hewn stone." Struck with wonder, he exclaims: "The beauty of their exterior defies description, and all who beheld them for the first time, bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration."

5. Cultural Trends

A satisfactory cultural history of India is yet to be written. No amount of descriptive material, arbitrarily crammed into the introductory or closing chapters of general histories can make good the deficiency. What we might more usefully do here is, therefore, merely to indicate the cultural trends at the stage we pick up our political history.

The beginning of the sixteenth century, as we have noted already, was an important turning point in the history of India and the world. It saw, in the first place, the opening up of new highways of contacts with the Western world; secondly, this synchronised with the crumbling of the old political system of medieval India; thirdly, it paved the way for fresh incursions from the North-Western passes, which were soon to culminate in the foundation of a new Muslim Empire. But these happenings were of more than mere political significance; their cultural importance was even greater. The break-up of the political unity of India was only a superficial phenomenon; it did not touch the deeper springs of the real life of the people. The fruitful economic activity, noticed in the foregoing section, was one indicator of the essential sound-

ness of the country's position. In the cultural spheres, India was passing through a process of transformation which was preparing her, unconsciously, for her modern destiny.

By "cultural spheres" we mean here, particularly, Religion, Art and Literature. These are concrete aspects of what is generally implied by the mystifying term "culture". It might also mean several other things; for example, the standard of living; refinement in dress, manners and speech; the general or fundamental attitude towards life, and so on. But the categories we have chosen are both comprehensive and capable of palpable assessment. Religion implies an 'attitude towards life', Art includes 'refinement' in various aspects of living, and Literature is bound up with the speech of daily intercourse. Music pervades all of them and truly expresses the soul of a people, but it is incapable of being sized up for tangible appreciation. Nevertheless, it is the one element in which Hindus and Muslims have, more than in anything else, merged completely.

The apparent contrasts which the violent impact of Islam evoked in India were considerably worn down in the course of the five centuries that separated the advent of the Mughals from Mahmud Ghazni. The most important fact that we have to remember in this connection is that all the Muslim conquerors of India were political empire-builders with predominantly secular, rather than religious, ambitions. Had they been genuine crusaders, our history and fortunes might well have been different. Our cultural *rapprochement* became possible because the Muslims came to rule as well as reside in this country. That they colonised and became Indians was the most vital aspect of the situation. This made for fusion in the realms of Religion, Art and Literature. "Seldom in the history of mankind," as Sir John Marshall has pointed out, "has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Muhammadan and Hindu, meeting and mingling together." The resulting synthesis, however, has shown that, in their fundamentals, the two cultures were not, after all, so "radically dissimilar".

In the first place, the Muslim rulers of India, by the time of Ibrahim Lodi, had ceased to be foreigners; some of them were, indeed, Indian converts or their descendants. They married Hindu women, and employed Hindus in all departments of government, civil as well as military. Successive Sultans, since Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq, extricated the Islamic State in India from its

theocratic affiliations and traditions. They all but completely overthrew the domination of theologians, and converted the State into a predominantly secular institution. Hence, though Arabic continued to be the language of orthodoxy, and Persian continued to enjoy its pride of place among the foreigners, provincial vernaculars—like Marathi and Bengali—were not merely tolerated, but also actively patronised by some of the Sultans. Urdu which began as a hybrid patois of the camp, was to become the medium of intercourse among the respectable. In fact, a linguistic link was forged between the conquerors and the conquered, the rulers and the ruled; and language is a powerful instrument of cultural synthesis. The mental chasm thus bridged, an intellectual exchange between the Hindus and the Muslims was established, which created a very rich amalgam. The literature, architecture, and religious movements of the period, all illustrate the trend towards union and elimination of differences.

Among the Sultans, the spirit of the age that was to reach its culmination under Akbar, first appeared in the personality of Firuz Shah Bahmani (1397-1422). Apart from his warlike activities, Firuz was noted for his eclecticism in matters of marriage and religion. He took Hindu and foreign wives, employed Brahmans in his service, and read the Bible. According to Meadows Taylor, "in religion he was perfectly tolerant of all sects and creeds", though Vincent A. Smith quarrels with this characterisation. But opinion is unanimous in describing Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70) as "the Akbar of Kashmir". He anticipated the greatest of the Mughal Emperors in the abolition of the *jiziya*, prohibition of cow slaughter, complete religious toleration, abstention from eating meat, and encouragement of literature. The *Mahabharata* and *Rajatarangini* (a Sanskrit history of Kashmir by Kalhana) were translated into Persian, while several Persian and Arabic works were rendered into Hindi. Temples destroyed during the previous reigns were reconstructed, Brahmans exiled were permitted to return, and persons forcibly converted to Islam allowed to revert to their original faith. How this liberal tendency was gaining ground all over the country is illustrated by the policy adopted by successive rulers of the Adilshahi dynasty of Bijapur and the Husainshahi dynasty of Bengal.* They freely employed Hindus in their administration, officially used the local vernaculars, tolerated all faiths, and earned the respect of all classes

* e.g. Yusuf Adil Shah (1490-1510) and Ibrahim Adil Shah (1535-58); Al-ud-din Husain Shah (1493-1518) and Nusrat Shah (1518-33).

of their subjects. Bengali literature received a fillip under the patronage of the Muslim rulers of this period. Translations of the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata*, into Bengali, were made by Vidyapati, Krittivasa, Kavindra Parameshvara, and Maladhar Vasu, by their encouragement.

The *Satyapir* cult of Bengal, which came into existence during this epoch, the Muslim following which the great Chaitanya attracted (1485-1533), the widespread appeal of the teachings of Kabir (1440-1518), and the creation of Sikhism by Guru Nanak (1469-1538), were all manifestations of the deeper workings of the spirit of synthesis that had come to stay in India. Rama and Rahim, they taught, were the same; Kaaba and Kailas may be different places, but "Hindus and Muslims are pots made out of the same clay". Nanak declared:

"Religion rests not in mere words;

He who looketh on all men as equals is truly
religious."

The same truth was promulgated by a host of religious teachers all over the country, which served to bring the masses together and weld them into a new Indian society. The emphasis laid by them on the fundamentals of faith and moral conduct as distinguished from superstitious ritual, and the universal adoption of the vernaculars by them, served to bring into existence a Democracy of Devotion in which all classes could participate. We shall illustrate the constructive power of this *Bhakti* or *Bhagavata* movement later on, with particular reference to the rise of the Maratha power. Even far down in the South, one of the Siddhars sang:

"O Brahmans list to me !

In all this blessed land

There is but one great caste,

One tribe and brotherhood;

One God doth dwell above

And He hath made us One

In birth and frame and tongue !"

Art is too technical a subject for common understanding or appreciation. But a few broad features may be noticed without much difficulty. In the first place, the Muslims being idol-breakers did not produce iconography like the Hindus. Orthodox Islam also prohibited the copying of life in any form whatsoever. Hence they made no progress in the portrayal of human and animal figures in painting or sculpture, until the Mughals came. In dress, however, they introduced new styles which were freely copied by the Hindus. In music, as we have remarked before, the

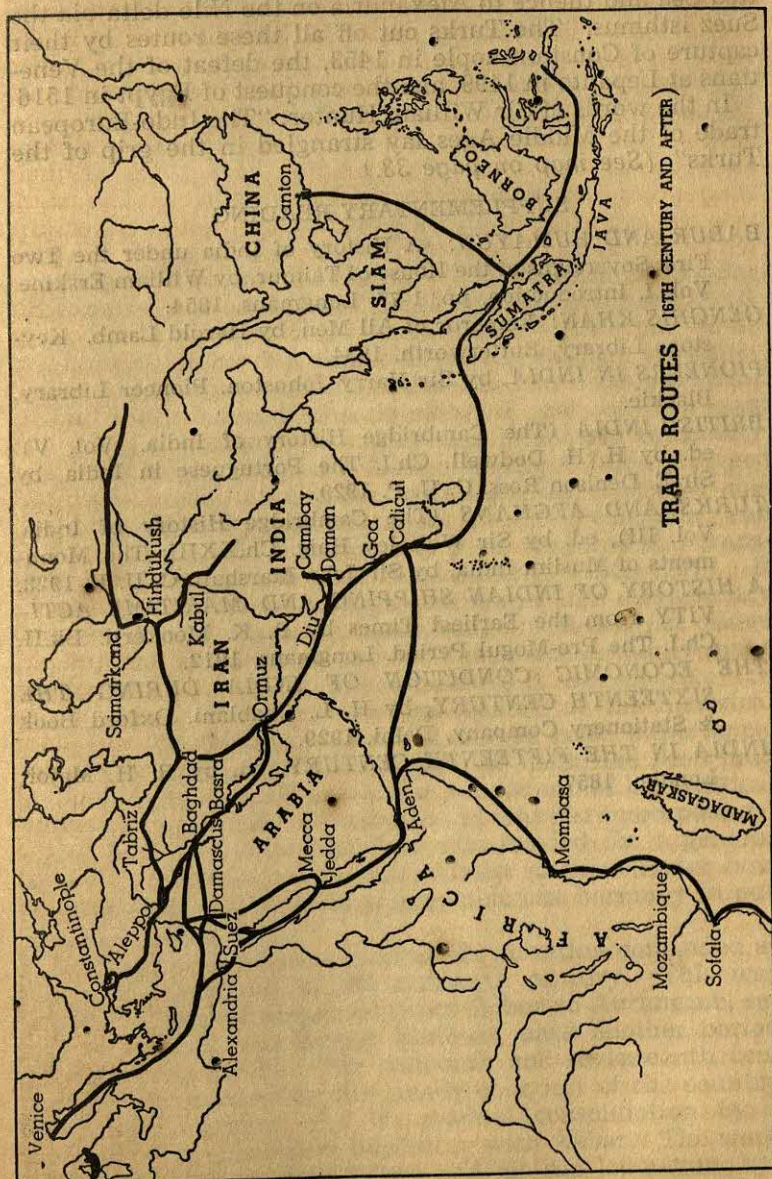
mingling was greatest, even like the fusion of Sufi mysticism with Hindu Vedanta. In the concrete field of architecture as well, Hindu and Muslim influences were reciprocal. This was due mainly to two causes: (i) in the early days of temple destruction, certain parts of them (e.g., pillars) were bodily removed and incorporated into the mosques which were erected in their places; (ii) local artisans and craftsmen with their deep-rooted traditions and conventions were pressed into the service of their conquerors for the construction of new edifices. The result was the evolution of an Indo-Muslim style of architecture, which in its turn influenced Hindu builders who adopted some of its more attractive *motifs* in their own.

"In the fusion of two styles which followed", writes Sir John Marshall, "Muhammadan architecture absorbed or inherited manifold ideas or concepts from the Hindu—so many, indeed, that there is hardly a form or *motif* of Indian architecture which in some guise or other did not find its way into the buildings of the conquerors. But more important than these visible borrowings of outward and concrete features is the debt which Indo-Islamic architecture owes to the Hindu for two of its most vital qualities; the qualities of strength and grace. . . . These are the two qualities which India may claim for her own, and they are the two qualities which in architecture count for more than all the rest. . . . They are qualities that were common at this epoch to the whole body of Indo-Islamic monuments, and are as conspicuous among those of Delhi as among those of Malwa, Gujarat and the Deccan, or wherever else Muslim genius came to resuscitate and enrich the older work of the Hindus. . . . That it exhibits. . . the same fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideals, the same happy blend of elegance and strength, is eloquent testimony to the enduring vitality of Hindu art under an alien rule and to the wonderful capacity of the Muslim for absorbing that art into his own and endowing it with a new and grander spirit."

NOTE: ON THE TRADE ROUTES

The importance of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, in 1453 A.D., will be realised from a closer acquaintance with the medieval Trade Routes between Europe and India. There were three alternatives: (i) The oldest of these was the Syrian route which went *via* Orumuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf and Basrah at its head, in the Euphrates delta, to Damascus or Aleppo on the Syrian coast, bifurcating at Baghdad on the Tigris river; thence it crossed the Eastern Mediterranean to Venice at the head of the

Adriatic Sea. (ii) The second or the Northern route proceeded from Baghdad and Aleppo to Constantinople across



Asia Minor, or followed a more northern overland course along the Oxus, the Caspian and the Black Sea on to

Western Europe. (iii) The third or the Southern route crossed the Arabian Sea to Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea and thence to Alexandria on the Nile delta *via* the Suez isthmus. The Turks cut off all these routes by their capture of Constantinople in 1453, the defeat of the Venetians at Lepanto in 1499, and the conquest of Egypt in 1516.

In the words of Sir William Hunter: "The Indo-European trade of the Middle Ages lay strangled in the grip of the Turks". (See map on page 33.)

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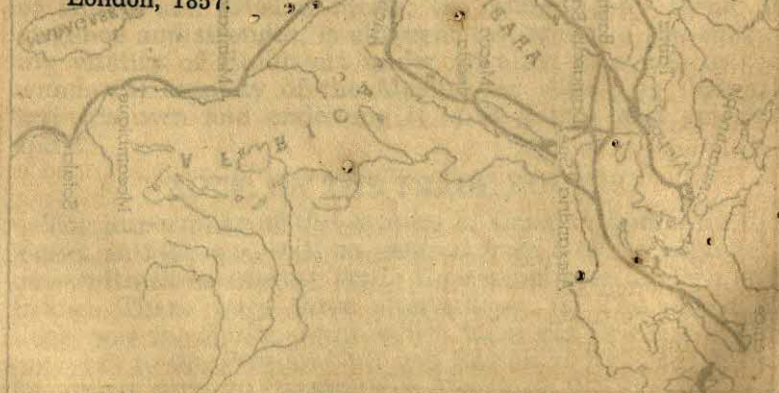
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Asia Minor or followed a more northern overland course along the Oxus, the Caspian and the Black Sea on to

CHAPTER TWO

CONQUEST OF DOMINION

1. *Foundation and Vicissitudes*: (a) Babur. (b) Humayun (c) Sher Shah. 2. *Recovery and Expansion*: (d) Akbar. 3. *Losses and gains*: (e) Jahangir. (f) Shah Jahan. 4. *Climax and Perils*: (g) Aurangzeb.

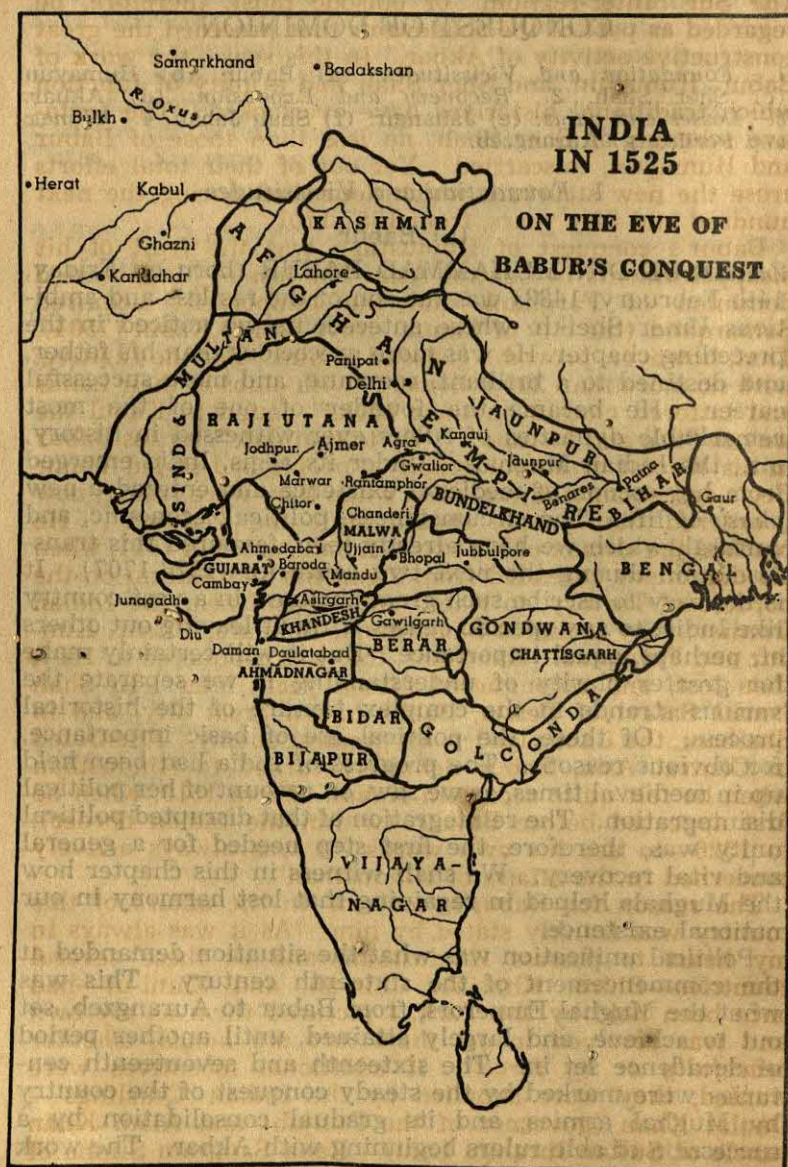
1. Foundation and Vicissitudes

(a) Babur

ZAHIR-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD BABUR (born on Friday, 14th February, 1483) was the son of the restless and ambitious Umer Sheikh, whose antecedents we noticed in the preceding chapter. He was more precocious than his father, and destined to a brilliant, romantic, and more successful career. He became the founder of one of the most remarkable dynasties of rulers ever witnessed in history, viz., the Indian Mughals. Under its aegis, India emerged from her cocoon of medieval existence and entered a new phase of life. The circumstances, political, economic, and cultural, which we have already seen, favoured this transformation during the next two centuries (1526-1707). It is not easy to ascribe such great changes, in a vast country like India, to any specific causes without leaving out others of, perhaps, equal importance. But it will certainly make for greater clarity of understanding if we separate the various strands in the complex texture of the historical process. Of these, the political are of basic importance, for obvious reasons. The progress of India had been held up in medieval times, as we saw, on account of her political disintegration. The reintegration of that disrupted political unity was, therefore, the first step needed for a general and vital recovery. We shall witness in this chapter how the Mughals helped in regaining that lost harmony in our national existence.

Political unification was what the situation demanded at the commencement of the sixteenth century. This was what the Mughal Emperors, from Babur to Aurangzeb, set out to achieve, and largely attained, until another period of decadence set in. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were marked by the steady conquest of the country by Mughal armies, and its gradual consolidation by a succession of able rulers beginning with Akbar. The work of conquest began with Babur and his son Humayun, but it was interrupted by the Afghan Sher Shah and his successors (1540-55). Hence consolidation, so far as the

Mughals were concerned, could not be undertaken until the reconquest of Hindusthan after the second battle of



Panipat in 1556. Nevertheless, substantially, its technique was suggested by the great Afghan statesman, Sher Shah,

who was not so fortunate as the Mughal to have talented successors capable of carrying forward his good work. The Sur "Inter-regnum" or episode must, therefore, be regarded as part of the spadework that preceded the great constructive activity of Akbar. In this sense, the work of Babur, Humayun, and Sher Shah had a unity of function which traditional historians have overlooked. The tentative schemes of Sher Shah, no less than those of Babur and Humayun, miscarried. Yet out of their total efforts arose the new structure which flourished during the next hundred and fifty years, from 1557-1707.

Babur's conquest of Hindusthan was the fruit of his disappointments in Central Asia. The loss of his inherited dominion of Farghana and the temporarily acquired Samarqand (the city of Timur) drove him to Kabul (1504). That, however, proved a godsend to him. For the fugitive, with no more than 300 followers "with clubs in their hands and tattered clothes on their backs", found in Kabul the way to "life and fortune". "Up to that date", writes Babur in his *Waqiat* or autobiography, "people had styled Timur Beg's descendants *Mirza*, even when they were ruling; now I ordered that people should style me *Padshah*". He reached the climax of his extra-Indian career in 1511, when his dominions extended from Tashkent and Sairam on the borders of Tartary, to Kabul and Ghazni near the Indian frontier; they included Samarqand, Bokhara, Hissar, Kunduz and Farghana. Kandahar, too, was conquered in 1507, then lost, and reconquered fifteen years later. In Shah Ismail Safavi of Persia, Babur had a great ally, and in Shaibani, the Uzbek leader, his greatest enemy. Frustrated in Central Asia, Babur definitely turned to Hindusthan when he felt quite secure in Kabul. From 1519, when he first appeared before Bajaur (within the Indian border), to 1526—to use his own words: "I was always actively concerned in the affairs of Hindusthan".

The reason for Babur's 'concern' in the affairs of this country was frankly stated by him: "As it was always in my heart to possess Hindusthan, and as these several countries—Bhira, Khus-ab, Chin-ab, and Chini-ut—had once been held by the Turk, I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them into my hands, whether peacefully or by force". If additional incentives were wanted, they were supplied by the Indian 'Quislings'—Daulat Khan (governor of the Punjab) and Alam Khan (uncle of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi). Rana Sangram Simha of Mewar, too, appears to have welcomed Babur in order to overthrow Ibrahim Lodi. The invader, however, was aware that "the greatest advantage of Hindusthan, besides

its vast extent of territory, is the amount of gold, coined and uncoined, which may be found there". He was, also a man of stern determination: "Filled as I was with the ambition of conquest and broad sway, one or two reverses could not make me sit down doing nothing."

In India, Babur's task was much easier than what it had been outside. The major factor in the situation was the absence of a central power to oppose him. Sultan Ibrahim, who enjoyed nominal hegemony, had more enemies than friends; and Babur was a keen and shrewd observer of men and things around him, as his autobiography reveals. He was a gifted general, with an army of seasoned and loyal soldiers. Well-equipped as he was with artillery, he was also a veteran tactician. As against all this, Ibrahim Lodi was, as Babur himself describes him, "an inexperienced young man, careless in his movements, who marched without order, halted or retired without method, and engaged without foresight". Consequently, at Panipat, where the decisive engagement was fought in the forenoon of April 21st, 1526, nearly half of the Delhi army (comprising 100,000 men), together with the Sultan, was laid to dust. Babur's troops numbered only 12,000 effectives. The treasures of Delhi and Agra were at once secured, and the Khutba was read in the victor's name, on Friday, 27th April. Babur occupied Ibrahim's palace at Agra, on 10th May, where he received from Humayun treasures including a diamond (Koh-i-noor) valued at "half the daily expenditure of the world."*

The next great enemy to be encountered was the disillusioned Rana Sangram Simha, leader of the Rajput Confederacy. He was so powerful that, according to Babur, the Sultans of Delhi, Gujarat and Malwa, "cajoled him and temporised with him". Even Babur's veteran and victorious soldiers felt nervous at the prospect of having to face the valiant Rajputs, and Babur had recourse to a dramatic gesture in order to fill them with confidence. He made a heroic speech: "We die as martyrs or kill as avengers of His cause!" Smashing all his drinking vessels, he took a public vow that he would not touch wine again. (He had been addicted to hard drinking all his life up till then.) "Therefore must each of you take oath upon His Holy

* Every soldier got his share of the booty. Babur's subjects in Kabul received a silver coin apiece, as a memento of the triumph. "Friends in other Muslim countries were surprised with precious gifts. Holy places like Mecca and Medina, as well as holy men, received rich offerings, out of gratitude to Allah for the victory. The balance was stored up for the support of the troops and the administration." (Lane-Poole)

Word that he will not think of turning his face from this foe, or withdraw from this deadly encounter so long as life is not rent from his body".

Rana Sanga (as Sangrama Simha was familiarly called) was the crippled fragment of a warrior, blind in one eye, and with one leg and an arm broken in battle. He had now a following of 120 chieftains, making up an army of 80,000 horse and 500 elephants. There were Muslims, too, who made common cause with the Rajputs on this occasion: Hasan Khan Mewati and Sultan Mahmud Lodi (brother of Ibrahim) were allies of the Rana, fighting against their common foe.

The battle was joined at Khanua (in Bharatpur State, 37 miles west of Agra) on Saturday, 16th March, 1527. The result was once more a victory for scientific technique over raw and desperate courage. Despite the presence of prominent Muslims in the ranks of his enemies, Babur regarded this as *jihad* and proclaimed himself a *Ghazi*! Rana Sanga escaped, but Medini Rai of Chanderi continued to resist.

Medini Rai was an important lieutenant of Rana Sanga. As chief minister of the Sultan of Mandu (Malwa) he had played the role of king-maker, and ultimately established himself independently at Chanderi—with the assistance of Rana Sanga. Besides Chanderi, Medini Rai also held Gagraun and several other districts in Malwa. Babur marched against him, on 9th December 1527, and captured the stronghold of Chanderi, on 29th January 1528, with great slaughter: "In the space of two or three *gheris*" (*gheri*—24 minutes) he converted it "from the mansion of hostility, which it had long been, into the mansion of Faith". For the time being, Rajasthan was overwhelmed. Rana Sanga was succeeded by his eldest son, Ratansi. But the younger, Bikramajit, intrigued with Babur, and secured the throne of Chitor for himself by surrendering the great fortress of Rantambhor to the Mughal, in exchange for Shamsabad on the Doab. Babur also received the crown and sword of Malwa (trophies captured by Rana Sanga in a previous war), and other booty enough to sustain his further conquests. After that he turned to the eastern provinces on the Ganges where the Afghans were gathering for a final stand.

The state of Hindusthan, after Babur's victory at Panipat, is described by him thus:

On our first coming to Agra, there was remarkable dislike and hostility between its people and mine, the peasantry and the soldiery running away in face of our men. Delhi and Agra excepted, not a fortified town

but strengthened its defences, and neither was in obedience nor subnltitted. Qasim Sambhali was in Sambhal; Nizam Khan in Biana; in Mewat was Hasan Khan Mewati himself—impious mannikin!—who was the sole leader of the trouble and mischief. Muhammad Zaitun was in Dholpur; Tatar Khan Sarang-Khani was in Gwalior; Husain Khan Nuhani was in Rapri; Qutb Khan was in Itawa (Etawa); Alam Khan (Kalpi) was in Kalpi. Qanauj and the other side of Gang (Ganges) was all held by Afghans in independent hostility, such as Nasir Khan Nuhani, Ma'ruf Farmuli and a crowd of other *amirs*.

The territory east of the Doab, from Kanauj to Gaur (both on the Ganges), was a part of the Empire of the Lodis which Babur did not acquire by his victory at Panipat. He had to make good his claim to it by further conquest. Though most of it was in the possession of the Pathans, there were several aspirants for its domination. The easternmost division—roughly corresponding with modern Bengal and Assam—was ruled by Nusrat Shah (1518-33), son of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah (who was of Arab extraction). West of it, between the Himalayas and the Ganges, were the two sultanates of Jaunpur and Bihar, since absorbed within the Lodi Empire. After the fall of Ibrahim Lodi, the Afghans rallied round three rival princes in succession: (i) Sultan Jalal-ud-din Sharqi, a scion of the old ruling family of Jaunpur, whom Babur now used as his spearhead; (ii) Sultan Jala-ud-din Lohani of Bihar, son of Sultan Muhammad (originally Bahar Khan, founder of the latest ruling family of Bihar), who was a minor; and (iii) Sultan Mahmud Lodi, brother of Ibrahim Lodi and late ally of the Rajputs at Khanua. But all of them were driven, ultimately, to seek shelter under Nusrat Shah of Bengal. Hence, at the end of a series of excursions, Babur had to try conclusions finally with the ruler of Bengal. This combination of the Afghans with Nusrat Shah was liquidated by Babur at the battle of the Gogra (north of Patna), on 6th May 1529. A treaty was, however, made by which the independence of Bengal was recognised on terms honourable to both parties.

Thus, by the three battles of Panipat, Khanua, and Gogra, in the course of three years, Babur secured the major portion of Hindusthan. At his death, which followed soon after, on Monday 26th December, 1530, his Empire stretched from the Amu river in Central Asia to the junction of the Gogra with the Ganges. Beyond the Hindu Kush, it included Badakhshan and Kunduz, and all the districts south of the Oxus down to Balkh. On the north-

west border of India, it comprised Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar, as far as Baluchistan. Within India, it included the Punjab, Sind, Multan, and the territory now comprising U.P. and Bihar. In Rajputana and Malwa, Babur held the important strongholds of Rantambhor and Chanderi. How these vast dominions were organised is described in the next chapter.

(b) Humayun

The Empire so unexpectedly won, did not become an established fact until a quarter century after the death of Babur. This was due, not merely to the sudden removal of its founder, but also to several other factors. These must be carefully scrutinised if we are to arrive at a true picture of the situation. Historians have mostly blamed Humayun's ineptitude for his loss of the newly acquired dominions. This view is more facile than fair, being the outcome of too great a concentration on the spectacular recovery of the Afghans under the leadership of the remarkable Sher Shah. But it is not to be forgotten that this was only temporary. No doubt, Humayun did not possess that combination of qualities which made for the success and greatness of his father Babur or son Akbar; he also lacked the genius and ability of his formidable rival Sher Shah. That was why Humayun was driven into exile (1540-55). Yet, along with this, it is not to be overlooked that Babur had left behind him a precarious legacy, consisting of a depleted treasury (thanks to his lavish expenditure) and an unconsolidated expanse of territory. This was also encumbered with the embarrassing stipulation on the credulous and good-natured Humayun, that he should be kind to his unworthy and treacherous brothers (Kamran, Askari and Hindal). Added to these were the weaknesses of Humayun's own virtues and vices: he was generous beyond the bounds of discretion, too refined to be a successful man of action, and too self-indulgent to be an Empire-builder. Nevertheless, he possessed great courage and pertinacity, which alone brought him back to the recovery of his lost inheritance. On the whole, he was more unlucky than incompetent.

The ill-luck was in his inherited situation. Immediately after his father's death, Humayun acted with promising alacrity. He was then barely twenty-three years old. Babur, too, had been unsuccessful until he came to Kabul in 1504, when he was twenty-one years of age. At Panipat he was forty-three, and died at forty-eight. The Afghans whom Babur had to face were more scattered, divided and leaderless, than they were at the accession of Humayun.

Now they were consolidated under Sher Khan in the east, and Bahadur Shah in the south. Either of these was potentially more dangerous than Ibrahim Lodi or Rana Sanga. Their virtual combination forced on Humayun a war on two fronts. The mischievous activities of the Mirzas (Humayun's brothers in the west, and his brother-in-law, Muhammad Zaman, in Gujarat) created a third hostile front, resulting in all but complete encirclement. Even a more resourceful man than Humayun might have been baffled by such a situation. Besides, he had no sons, as yet (as Babur had) on whom to pivot his auxiliaries. Still, he set about his task with circumspection and courage during the first five years of his reign. Nay, there appeared to be little cause for alarm until after 1538 when he captured Gaur. But the happenings between 1535 and 1538 were fateful; the following two years proved fatal. During those months, the sudden death of Bahadur Shah (in 1537) might have afforded sufficient relief, if Kamran, Askari, and Hindal had remained loyal. Their treachery was unfortunate in its consequences.

The first disastrous step that Humayun was led into was to acquiesce in the division of his inheritance. His cousin Suleiman Mirza was confirmed in Badkhsan, and his brother Kamran in Kabul and Kandahar. Sambhal was bestowed upon Askari, and Alwar (or Mewat) on Hindal. But, not content with his portion, Kamran—the most perfidious of the Mirzas—marched into the Punjab, took Lahore, and managed to appropriate to himself the territory up to the river Sutlej. Humayun foolishly added to this the rich province of Hissar-Firuza, falling a prey to his brother's flattery. By these grants, Humayun's Empire was reduced by nearly one half; but it was also the better half. Thereby he lost the tap-root of his army and strategically the most vital part. "The custom of granting large governments or appanages to the younger princes", writes Erskine, "gave them the means of asserting their ambitious pretensions by force, at the head of armies."

Determined to complete the conquests of his father Humayun led his first expedition against Kalinjar in Bundelkand (in May-June, 1531). Its possession was necessary to strengthen the frontier as well as to open easier communications between Malwa and the Mughal dominions on the Jumna and the Ganges. He made a treaty with its Raja on his paying a substantial tribute. He then proceeded eastwards, crossing the Ganges, and overthrew a combination of the Afghans under Sultan Mahmud Lodi, near Dadrah (August, 1532). Mahmud fled to Jaunpur at first,

and then to Patna, ultimately dying (in 1543) a refugee in Bengal. Thus ended the last scion of the uprooted Lodi dynasty in the eastern provinces. But out of its ashes arose a new Pathan power under Sher Khan Sur, whom we have mentioned more than once before, and whose fuller story will be narrated in the next section. Humayun marched from Dadrah to Chunar (16 miles S.W. of Benares), a rocky fort commanding a strategic position on the Ganges. It was held by Sher Khan who had acquired it under romantic circumstances. The Mughals invested it for four months, from September to December, 1532. But the news of developments in the south, owing to the activities of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, made Humayun conclude a treaty with Sher Khan who surrendered his son Qutb Khan as a pledge of good faith.

Humayun's campaign against Bahadur Shah was provoked by two circumstances: (i) Since his accession to the throne of Gujarat, in 1526, Bahadur Shah had pursued a policy of expansion, and conquered Malwa. He was now threatening Agra while actually engaged in investing Chitor. (ii) He had given asylum to two important fugitives from the Mughal Emperor, viz. Alam Khan Ala-ud-din Lodi (an Afghan pretender to the throne of Delhi) and Muhammad Zaman Mirza (Babur's son-in-law who had rebelled). Both these had been imprisoned, but they escaped and found refuge in Gujarat. Bahadur Shah, having failed to give satisfaction through diplomatic channels, Humayun felt it necessary to chastise him.

Marching from Agra, he first halted at Sarangpur (in Dewas State, C.I.), in January 1535. Seeing that Bahadur Shah was engaged at Chitor, he by-passed him to Ujjain, thus cutting his retreat to Mandu (capital of Malwa). The only alternative left for Bahadur Shah was to return straight to Ahmedabad which was nearly equidistant from Chitor and Ujjain. Humayun next moved to Mandasor in order to get closer to the capital of Gujarat. Bahadur Shah saw clearly that he was being outmanoeuvred by the Mughal Emperor. He, therefore, hastened to prevent Humayun from reaching his objective. But, at Mandasor, he found himself besieged for a whole fortnight (10th to 25th April, 1535). After this he effected his escape with only five followers. This was, indeed, a triumph for Humayun. Indirectly, it also afforded relief to the hard pressed Rajputs, who now got an opportunity to recover Chitor.

The rest of the story may be briefly told. Humayun followed up his advantage by pursuing the fugitive Bahadur Shah from city to city: Mandu, Champanir and Cambay—all in one fortnight, 1st to 15th June, 1535. The Mughals

took another five weeks over the completion of their capture of Champanir (about 25 miles north of Baroda) which was of strategic importance in the heart of Gujarat. "The great strength of this place, the numerous garrison, and the boldness and success of the enterprise by which its capture was effected", observes Ferishta, "render this action equal, in the opinion of military men, to anything of the kind recorded in history." "Malwa and Gujarat—two provinces equal in area to all the rest of Humayun's kingdom—had fallen like ripe fruit into his hands." (Lane-Poole). But they were equally easily lost, as soon as Humayun's back was turned. The sequel is inextricably dovetailed with the rise of Sher Shah Sur in Hindusthan. It is also the story of the temporary uprooting of the Mughal dynasty from India. Its resettlement, it is often forgotten, was the achievement of Humayun.

(c) Sher Shah

The contest between Humayun and Sher Shah was not one between two individuals but races: the Turks and the Afghans. It was for sovereignty over Hindusthan. The Turks had dominated the country for nearly two centuries and a half, since the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi, (1206), when the Afghan Lodis became masters in their place (in 1450). With the entry of Babur came a fresh Turki challenge to the Afghan supremacy which was overthrown at Panipat in 1526. But the triumph of the Mughals, as we witnessed, was incomplete. The Afghans could still retrieve their lost position, given a chance and good leadership. These offered themselves with the death of Babur and the advent of Sher Khan.

Fascinating as the biography of this greatest of Afghan heroes and statesmen in India is, we must concentrate more on the significance of the Sur episode in the making of a united India, than on its romantic details. From this point of view, Sher Shah achieved in a remarkably short time both the territorial conquest of Hindusthan and its administrative organisation. Within the same period (1526-45) Babur and Humayun together failed to show anything of parallel worth. The Afghan, therefore, assuredly held the palm over the Mughal for the time being. During the first twelve or thirteen, out of these twenty, years (1526-38)—i.e., until after Humayun's capture of Gaur—there was little in the situation to foretell the overthrow of the Mughals. That came about suddenly as the result of the two battles of Chausa (1539) and Bilgram (1540). We have to view the events leading up to it in the light of these observations.

The original name of Sher Shah (lit. 'Lion King'—a title acquired later) was Farid. He was the son of a Punjabi Pathan, named Hasan, of the Sur tribe. They were Afghans settled in India for three generations. Hasan moved to the east where he secured the three districts of Sahasram, Hajipur and Tanda (near Benares) as a *jagir*. Owing to troubles within the family, Farid entered Babur's camp at Agra after Panipat. He even enlisted in the Mughal service for some time (April 1527 to June 1528). Yet, opportunist that he was, he soon after joined the Afghan rebels and found his fortune with them. By dint of sheer ability he rose to be their leader, somewhat like Balban in earlier times. As chief minister to the infant Sultan Jalal-ud-din Lohani, he became master of Bihar. In 1531, he occupied Chunar by ingratiating himself with Lad Malika (widow of its owner Taj Khan). We have referred before to Humayun's siege of that fortress and treaty with Sher Khan, as Farid was then known. But the jealousy evoked by his rapid rise resulted in a conspiracy being hatched among rival clans of the Afghans. They even enlisted the support of the Sultans of Bihar and Bengal. Nevertheless, in September 1533, Sher Khan proved his superiority over all of them by defeating their combined forces at Surajgarh (on the banks of the Kiul river, east of Bihar town). By this victory, the dispossessed son of a mere *jagirdar* became, at once, a serious rival to the Emperor of Hindusthan. When Humayun marched against Bahadur Shah, Sher Khan found his golden opportunity to consolidate his power. Refugees soon began to pour in from Malwa and Gujarat, and the resourceful Sher Khan made capital out of them. He invaded Bengal, in force, in October 1537.

Humayun, now roused by these developments, made up his mind to overthrow Sher Khan, as he believed he had done with Bahadur Shah.* In any case, the situation in the eastern provinces called for immediate action. The strategy and swiftness of Sher Khan, however, completely baffled Humayun who was too sluggish to save himself. While the Mughal Emperor was picking up the 'apple' of Chunar—(October 1537 to March 1538)—in this Atalanta's race, Sher Khan had already occupied Gaur, capital of Bengal; by the time the imperial forces reached Gaur in pursuit of him, the Afghan Robin Hood was strongly

* Bahadur Shah made a fresh effort at recovery, but had to face the Portuguese who were menacing his coast. Unfortunately he got drowned in a scuffle at Diu, on 13th February 1537.—See Cambridge History of India Vol. III. pp.333-4. For Bahadur's earlier history, *ibid* pp.321-33.

entrenched in Rohtas (on the river Son, 83 degrees Long.—24 degrees Lat.). From that strategic centre he effectively cut off the Mughal retreat. When Humayun was regaling himself (August 1538 to April 1539) under a false sense of triumph and security, the monsoon burst upon him. It was more than a meteorological phenomenon. It washed away the eastern provinces of the Mughal Empire.

From the beginning of April to 26th of June 1539, the two hostile armies faced each other at Chausa (between the Ganges and its tributary the Karmanasa, near Buxar). Sher Khan played upon Humayun's credulity by insincere negotiations, inducing the belief that he would be content with recognition as independent ruler of Bengal. Finally, he made a surprise attack and routed the imperial forces. Humayun, suffering heavy losses and separated from his family, escaped to Agra by the skin of his teeth. Sher Khan, now, proclaimed himself 'Sher Shah' and organised the territories from Kanauj to Assam as sovereign ruler. On the 17th May 1540, Humayun again attempted to challenge Sher Shah. But, at Bilgram (near Kanauj), the verdict of Chausa was finally confirmed. In the words of Mirza Haidar who was present on the scene: "The Chaghatais (Mughals) were defeated in this battle where not a man, either friend or foe, was wounded; not a gun was fired; and the chariots were useless." His brothers having failed him in the hour of desperate need, Humayun fled from Kanauj to Agra, and from Agra to Lahore, whence Sher Shah hunted him out of Hindusthan. Towards the end of October 1540, Kamran and Askari finally parted from Humayun at Bahra (or Bhera on the Jhelum), where Babur had first appeared twenty-one years earlier (1519). Kamran retired to Kabul, and Mirza Haidar secured Kashmir "without striking a blow".

The Odyssey of Humayun is not quite apposite to our theme. It is part of his biography in which only a few incidents may be considered relevant here. The first of these, and of unique interest, is the birth of Akbar, on 15th October 1542, at Amarkot (or Umerkot) in Sind. The next, while on his way to Persia, Humayun was obliged to leave his infant son in Kandahar (1543). It was, indeed, a lucky circumstance that Askari picked him up and nursed him during these fateful years. Thanks to the friendliness of Shah Tahmasp (son of Shah Ismail Safavi who was Babur's great ally), Humayun "received all that he could require, and lacked nothing". Finally, with a force of 14,000 troops, lent by the Shah of Persia, he once more turned to the reconquest of his lost dominion. The further course of

these efforts may be followed after we have considered the fortunes of the Surs since Sher Shah's victory.

"If luck aided me and fortune stood my friend," Sher Khan is reported to have said, "I could easily oust the Mughals from Hindusthan. . . . I have often experienced that the Afghans are braver in battle than the Mughals, who only got the country from the dissensions of the Afghans." Events showed how this was quite true. After the exit of Humayun, Sher Shah set about the completion and consolidation of his conquests. Having speedily settled the conditions in his home provinces, he turned to the west and the south. The Mughals were first of all hounded out of India. "I am now at ease regarding the whole country from Delhi to Lucknow", declared Sher Shah. He laid waste the country of the Gakkars and built there a new stronghold calling it 'Little Rohtas' (in memory of its prototype in Bihar). He confirmed Ismail Khan in Sind, and wisely left the Baluch tribes (Baluchistan) undisturbed in their possessions. Then he subdued Malwa taking possession of Mandu, Raisin, etc. (1543). Next he entered Rajputana (Marwar or Jodhpur), but scored only a Pyrrhic victory there; for, as he confessed, "I had nearly lost the kingdom of Delhi for a handful of *badri* (millet)!" (March, 1544). Chitor surrendered without a fight. Finally, fate called him to Kalinjar (in Bundelkhand), in November 1544. Its siege was protracted till 22nd May 1545, when Sher Shah was mortally wounded by a bursting shell. He was about sixty years of age then. However, he died, like Wolfe at Quebec, with the satisfaction that victory had been won.

2. Recovery and Expansion

(d) Akbar

We have now come to an important stage in the vicissitudes of fortune of the Afghans as well as the Mughals. Upon the final turn of events depended the future of India. It soon became clear that the game of the Afghans was up. There was also a change for the better on the Mughal side. The decade that followed the death of Sher Shah was even more fateful than that following the death of Babur. For, during the ten years from 1530-40, the Mughals had lost everything; during the ten years from 1545-55, they were on the way to the recovery of Hindusthan. The Afghans, with the singular exception of Sher Shah, were medieval; the Mughals, on the other hand, as we pointed out before, had many modern traits. The tilting of the balance in favour of the latter was, therefore, a stroke of good fortune.

Humayun occupied Kandahar, with the help of the Persians, in September 1545—only four months after the death of Sher Shah. Kabul came into Humayun's hands finally in April 1547, though the submission of Kamran was delayed until August 1548. (Both Kamran and Askeri were dispatched to Mecca, and Hindal died in a skirmish in 1551. So disappeared the turbulent Mirzas from history.) Mirza Suleiman, after some vacillation, joined Humayun and remained loyal after he was confirmed in his possession of Badakhshan in 1546. Humayun showed considerable energy during this period. He made persistent efforts to recover his father's lost dominions in Central Asia. But he could not go beyond Balkh at any time. Even from there he was forced by the Uzbeks to retire. Ultimately, like Babur, he too once again turned to Hindusthan in 1554.

The conditions in India, at this stage, were even worse than what had favoured the first conquests of the Mughals in 1526. With the death of Mirza Haidar, in 1549, Kashmir had fallen into confusion. Islam Shah (or Selim Shah), who succeeded Sher Shah, had not been able to hold his dominions intact. Disorders were already rampant therein. With his death, in November 1554, anarchy of the worst sort appeared on every side. The rebels openly declared: "No one obtains a kingdom by inheritance; it belongs to whosoever can gain it by the sword." This was only too well demonstrated when Selim's son Firuz Shah (a prince-ling of twelve summers) was assassinated by Mubariz Khan (son of Sher Shah's brother Nizami Khan Sur), within three days of his accession. The murderer, who was the boy's maternal uncle, tore him from his mother's protecting arms and dispatched him in the most callous manner. The usurper then proclaimed himself Emperor with the title of Mahmud Shah 'Adil' (i.e. 'the just!'). As Elphinstone has observed: "His character was not such as to efface the memory of his crime; he was grossly ignorant, fond of coarse debauchery and low society, and as despicable from his incapacity as he was odious for his vices." The ill-fated Hemu, who was a shop-keeper (made Superintendent of Markets by Selim), now ran the entire administration. Affairs became so chaotic that, when Mahmud Shah went to the eastern provinces in pursuit of the rebel Taj Khan Kirani, his own brother-in-law and cousin Ibrahim Khan seized the throne of Delhi and assumed royalty. But his example was too infectious, and another relation of Mahmud's (his wife's brother), Ahmad Khan—another nephew of Sher Shah's—challenged Ibrahim's sovereignty, routed him in battle, and occupied Delhi and Agra with

the title of Sikandar Shah Sur. Ibrahim fled to Sambhal, as Mahmud had run away into Bihar; there was already another Sur, Mahomed Shah, independently settled in Bengal. Thus, there were in all four members of Sher Shah's family simultaneously misruling Hindusthan. Ferishta describes the internal condition of each kingdom in these terms: "The chiefs began to dispute about governments, honours and places, and the flames of discord were rekindled, and blazed fiercer than ever, so that everyone reproached his neighbour with the perfidy of which each was equally guilty."

Humayun quit Kabul on 12th November 1554, leaving that province to the charge of his younger son Mirza Muhammad Hakim and Munim Khan. Bairam Khan and Prince Akbar accompanied the ex-Emperor to India. They crossed the Indus on the last day of the year. The governor of 'Little Rohtas' offered no resistance, and the invaders proceeded to Lahore, which they occupied on 24th February 1555. "The districts of the Punjab, Sirhind and Hissar, all came without a struggle into the hands of the Chaghatais." The Mughal forces were concentrated at Julfundur. When they crossed the Sutlej, the Afghans opposed them at Machhiwara, but were easily routed. Sikandar Sur, enraged by this, advanced to Sirhind with 100,000 men, and offered more determined resistance. Nevertheless, the Mughals under Bairam Khan again triumphed over the Afghans. "This victory," Ferishta observes, "decided the fate of the Empire; and the kingdom of Delhi fell forever from the hands of the Afghans." On 23rd July 1555, Humayun entered Delhi, and the *Khutba* was once again read in his name. Still, he was no more fortunate than his late adversary Sher Shah had been; for he met with an accidental death on 24th January 1556. Nonetheless, the cause of the Mughals prospered because of two personalities: Bairam Khan and Akbar.

Bairam Khan Baharlu, Shia by faith, was one of the most remarkable men of his time. He had stuck to Humayun through thick and thin, and few could rival his devoted loyalty. The Emperor did not exaggerate when he declared: "There is no lamp like thee in our family." It was mainly on account of him that Humayun's sojourn in Persia had turned out happy and fruitful. Quite naturally, he was appointed governor of Kandahar when it was conquered, until he was called to join Humayun in his Indian campaign. He was the victor of Machhiwara and was rewarded with the *jagir* of Sirhind, made *Khan-i-khanan*, appointed *Atga* (Guardian) to Akbar (November 1555), and affectionately called *Khan-i-baba* ('Lord Father'). Indeed,

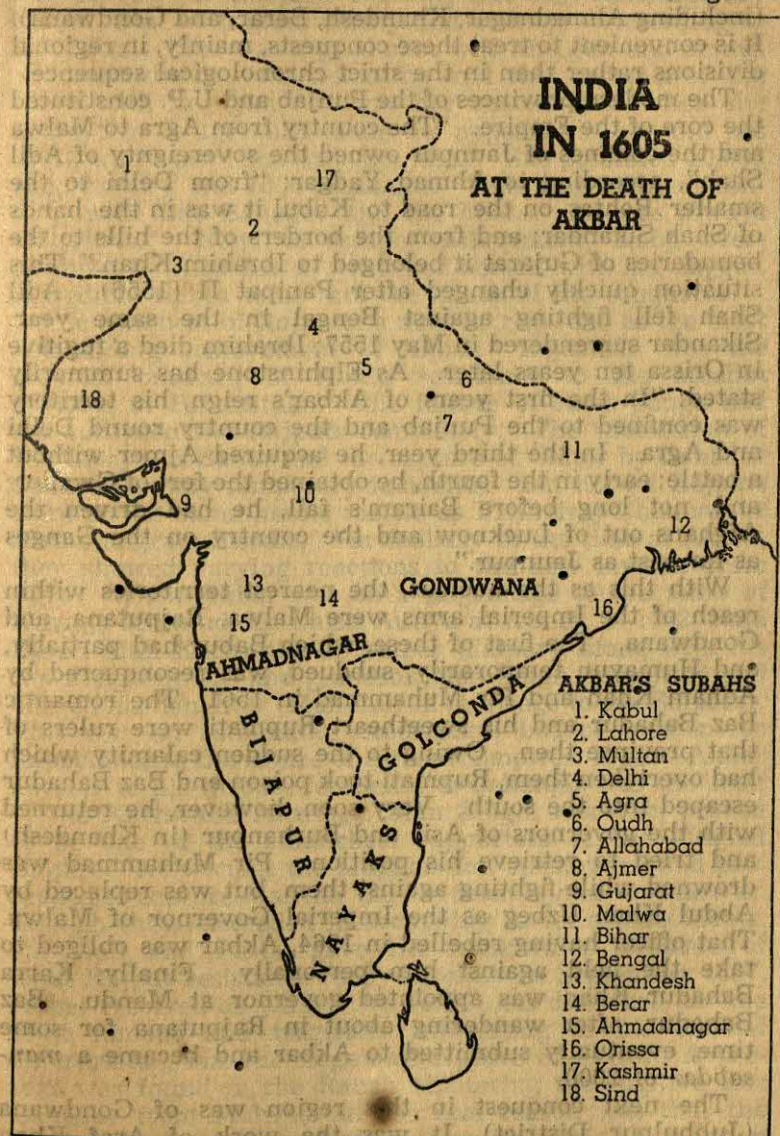
Akbar could have had no better friend and servant to pilot him through the difficult period ahead. Bairam Khan continued to be his real guardian until he decided to "drop the pilot", as we shall see later.

Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar (born, 15th October 1542) was destined to be one of our greatest rulers. The circumstances of his birth and infancy showed that he possessed a charmed life; for he might easily have been killed when his uncle Kamran wantonly exposed him to artillery fire during the siege of Kabul by Humayun. He commanded a division at the battle of Sirhind and the victory was proclaimed in his name. He was granted Hissar-Firuzi in reward and appointed governor of Lahore. When Humayun suddenly died, the *Khutba* was first recited, in Delhi, in Akbar's name on 11th February 1556, though his coronation took place, at Kalanaur, three days later. But these formal proclamations and ceremonials could not make Akbar the sovereign of India. The Sur Sultans were still abroad, and Hemu dominated the situation in Hindusthan more than anyone else. He captured Agra and marched on Delhi. In the face of this avalanche, Tardi Beg Khan (the Mughal governor) abandoned the Imperial city to the enemy who proclaimed himself Maharaja Vikramajit. Under these circumstances, Akbar was obliged to take drastic action against the delinquent governor of Delhi; he was summarily executed. "The punishment," writes V. A. Smith, "although inflicted in an irregular fashion without trial, was necessary and substantially just. It may be reasonably affirmed that failure to punish the dereliction of Tardi Beg from his duty would have cost Akbar both his throne and his life."

The challenge of Hemu was met, once more, on the historic field of Panipat, where the decisive action was fought on 5th November 1556. Here history repeated itself: the 100,000 men on the side of the enemy of the Mughals were scattered or slaughtered by the 20,000 effective forces under Bairam Khan and Akbar. Hemu himself was hit in the eye (like Harold at the battle of Hastings) with tragic consequences; he was captured and executed. In medieval times such battles decided the fate of empires and peoples. The second battle of Panipat reaffirmed the verdict of the first. India's immediate future was to be henceforward shaped by the Mughals.

Akbar was just past thirteen years when he ascended the throne at Kalanaur. The earlier conquests effected during his reign were, therefore, the work of some of his able officers. Just as Bairam Khan had borne the brunt of leadership up to Panipat, so after that it was shared by

other generals, some of whom were instrumental in bringing about Bairām Khan's fall in 1560. Reserving the



internal affairs of the Empire for later consideration, we shall concentrate here on its external expansion. By the end of Akbar's rule (1605) the Mughals had become masters of the whole of Hindusthan—from the Hindu Kush to the

frontiers of Assam and Orissa; and from Kashmir and the Himalayas to Baluchistan, Sind, Gujarat, and the Deccan (including Ahmadnagar, Khandesh, Berar, and Gondwana). It is convenient to treat these conquests, mainly, in regional divisions rather than in the strict chronological sequence.

The modern provinces of the Punjab and U.P. constituted the core of the Empire. "The country from Agra to Malwa and the confines of Jaunpur owned the sovereignty of Adil Shah", according to Ahmad Yadgar: "from Delhi to the smaller Rohtas on the road to Kabul it was in the hands of Shah Sikandar; and from the borders of the hills to the boundaries of Gujarat it belonged to Ibrahim Khan." This situation quickly changed after Panipat II (1556). Adil Shah fell fighting against Bengal in the same year. Sikandar surrendered in May 1557; Ibrahim died a fugitive in Orissa ten years later. As Elphinstone has summarily stated: "In the first years of Akbar's reign, his territory was confined to the Punjab and the country round Delhi and Agra. In the third year, he acquired Ajmer without a battle; early in the fourth, he obtained the fort of Gwalior; and, not long before Bairam's fall, he had driven the Afghans out of Lucknow and the country on the Ganges as far east as Jaunpur."

With this as the nucleus, the nearest territories within reach of the Imperial arms were Malwa, Rajputana, and Gondwana. The first of these, which Babur had partially, and Humayun temporarily, subdued, was reconquered by Adham Khan and Pir Muhammad in 1561. The romantic Baz Bahadur and his sweetheart Rupmati were rulers of that province then. Owing to the sudden calamity which had overtaken them, Rupmati took poison and Baz Bahadur escaped into the south. Very soon, however, he returned with the governors of Asir and Burhanpur (in Khandesh) and tried to retrieve his position. Pir Muhammad was drowned while fighting against them, but was replaced by Abdul Khan Uzbek as the Imperial Governor of Malwa. That officer having rebelled in 1564, Akbar was obliged to take the field against him personally. Finally, Karra Bahadur Khan was appointed governor at Mandu. Baz Bahadur, after wandering about in Rajputana for some time, eventually submitted to Akbar and became a *mansabdar* of 2000.

The next conquest in this region was of Gondwana (Jubbulpur District). It was the work of Asaf Khan (Khwaja Abdul Majid), Mughal governor of Karra. The province had never been conquered before by the Muslims. It was at that time ruled by the heroic Rani Durgavati (1564). She came from the ancient Chandel dynasty of

Mahoba, and was regent to her son Bir Narayan (a Gond). She served her adopted country, like her contemporary Chand Bibi, with great ability and courage. According to Abul Fazl: "She was a good shot with the gun and arrow, and continually went a-hunting and shot animals of the chase with her gun. It was her custom that when she heard that a tiger had made his appearance, she did not drink water until she had shot him." She possessed 20,000 good cavalry and 1000 elephants. "She had frequent contests with Baz Bahadur and the Miahs, and was always victorious." Now, to escape enslavement, being overpowered by Asaf Khan, she killed herself with her dagger. Incredible riches came into the hands of the conqueror.

The conquest of Rajputana may be regarded as the most outstanding achievement of Akbar. Rajasthan was the greatest bulwark of Hindu resistance to the Muslim advance in Hindusthan. The failure of Rana Sanga had not eclipsed the Rajputs completely. The submission of Bikramajit to Babur and the capture of Chitor by Bahadur Shah were only temporary incidents. But not all Rajputs were of the same heroic mettle as Prithviraj Chauhan or Rana Sangram Sisodia. Particularly in the time of Akbar, they showed varying reactions to the new invader from Agra. When Akbar was on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chisti Auliya at Ajmer, in 1562, Raja Bihari Mall Kachwaha of Amber (Jaipur), along with his son Bhagwan Das and grandson Man Singh, submitted and offered his daughter (Man Bai) in marriage to the Emperor. This was an astounding occurrence, but of momentous importance to the future of Akbar's Empire. It gave Akbar an heir to his throne; for Selim or Jahangir was the fruit of the Kachwaha marriage. Man Singh, moreover, proved to be one of the staunchest supporters of the Mughal Empire. No wonder the Mughals felt encouraged and proceeded to capture Mairtha (20 kos from Ajmer) in Marwar. Though they succeeded in occupying it, its commandants, Jai Mall and Patta, gave the invaders a foretaste of what Rajput resistance really meant. In September 1567, Akbar resolved on what V. A. Smith has described as "the most famous and tragically interesting of his martial enterprises", viz. the siege and capture of Chitor. A pretext was found in the Rana's sheltering the fugitive Baz Bahadur from Malwa; but the real reason was that the valiant chief was "proud of his steep mountains and strong castles, and turned away the head of obedience from the sublime Court". Despite the fact that "it was the ill fate of Mewar to be cursed with a craven prince (Udai Singh) at the critical moment when India was ruled by the ablest,

and perhaps the most ambitious, sovereign who has ever swayed her sceptre", Chitor offered the most heroic resistance,* on account of Jai Mall and Patta. Nevertheless, it was a vain contest; the slaughter was terribly heavy and the Rajputnis committed *jauhar*. Akbar took possession of the historic stronghold, and ended his campaign with a pilgrimage to the tomb of Chisti. He returned to Agra in March 1568. After a year's rest, he again marched out against Rantambhor (in Jaipur State) in February 1569. Its commandant, Rai Surjan, surrendered with some show of resistance. This was followed, in 1570, by the submission of various chiefs: Raja Ram Chander of Kalinjar, Raja Kalyan Mall of Bikaner, Chander Sen, son of Mall Dev of Nagor, and others. Nonetheless, the last word was yet to come from the toughest of the Rajputs—Rana Pratap.

Rana Udai Singh, who had fled from Chitor at Akbar's approach, lived only for four more years (d. 3rd March 1572). He was succeeded by Pratap (*lit.* 'prowess'), "but without a capital, without resources, his kindred and clan dispirited by reverses; yet possessed of the noble spirit of his race". The princes of Marwar, Amber, Bikaner, Bundi and, even his own brother Sagarji, were all on the side of Akbar. But the Lion of Rajasthan had decided to "make his mother's milk resplendent; the bare idea that a scion of Bappa Rawal should bow his head to the Turk was insupportable." This spirit led him to Gogunda (or Haldighat), in June 1576, when the noblest blood of Rajasthan was spilt to keep the plant of liberty alive. It was an epic struggle in which the vanquished were more to be admired than the victors. Raja Man Singh was fighting for Akbar, proving the truth of Mulla Shir's dictum, quoted by Badauni: "A Hindu strikes, but the sword is Islam's!" The cause of the Mughals once again triumphed. The glorious Pratap went into the wilderness of Chaund. For a time, when Akbar was far too preoccupied, the Rana recovered most of Mewar excepting Chitor, Ajmer, and Mandalgarh. But it was only the last flicker of a dying flame. Worn out by years of hard struggle, Pratap died on 19th January 1597, at the age of fifty-seven. Yet, before he passed away, he got his son Amar Singh to swear retribution on the Mughal (much as the Carthaginian Hamilcar did with Hannibal against ancient Rome, and with no better result). The Mughals opened a fresh offensive in 1599, under Man Singh and Prince Selim, but Mewar remained unsubdued until 1614.

* From 20th October 1567 to 23rd February 1568.

For a determined Imperialist like Akbar, the conquest of territories needed few incentives beyond his own ambition. Nevertheless, he was never at a loss for excuses to launch a fresh campaign. The possession of Malwa and Rajputana made it easy as well as tempting to march into Gujarat. An invitation from its titular ruler, Muzaffar III, gave the expedition an air of innocence in 1572. Ever since Humayun's conquest and loss of that rich but unfortunate province, there was complete anarchy there. If further justification were needed, some of the fugitive Mirzas of the Chaghatai family had sought asylum in Gujarat; their pursuit and punishment were legitimate objectives. Akbar, consequently, started from Fatehpur Sikri (his new capital) on 4th July 1572. Marching *via* Ajmer, Nagor, and Sirohi, he was received by Muzaffar Shah at Batan in November. Next, Itimad Khan of Ahmedabad came with its keys and "showed every sign of submission". On Friday, 14th February 1573, Akbar pitched his camp at Sabarmati. "The *Khutba* was read in the name of the Emperor, and all the people of the city and environs came to offer congratulations and thanksgivings." But there were still numerous recalcitrant elements to be subdued, and important and strategic places to be taken, before the Mughal hold on Gujarat could be considered secure. The battle of Sarnal (5 miles E. of Khaira) and the capture of Surat are typical examples. Surat was occupied on 26th February. Leaving the province in the charge of Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka, Akbar left Gujarat in March 1573. But he had hardly been six months in his capital when news came of fresh outbreaks there. Reports from Khan-i-Azam confirmed the seriousness of the situation. Hence, on Sunday, 23rd August 1573, the Emperor set out post haste from Fatehpur, mounted on she-camels, and reached Toda—70 miles S.W. of Agra—"without drawing rein". On 2nd September he fought the decisive battle of Ahmedabad, by which "the back of the rebellion was broken". The victor, spear in hand, rode proudly back into his capital, on Monday, 5th October 1573—within 43 days after he had left it. "Considering the distances traversed, Akbar's second Gujarat expedition may be described safely as the quickest campaign on record" (Smith). Barring a few temporary risings, Gujarat remained in the Imperial hands of the Mughals until it was taken by the Marathas in 1758.

Of equal importance and value was Bengal. Humayun had nominally occupied Gaur in 1538. His Sur successors had only a precarious hold over that province which, since the time of Balban, was notorious as *Balghakpur* or 'the home of revolts'. Its independent ruler, Suleiman Kirahi,

however, appears to have acknowledged Akbar's suzerainty, until his death in 1572-3. But, out of the troubles which then ensued, emerged Daud, who at once assumed an hostile attitude towards the Mughals. He attacked Patna which had been fortified by Khan Zaman, the Imperial Governor of Jaunpur. The present Governor, Khan-i-khanan Munim Khan, who was very old and friendly towards Suleiman Kirani, temporised, seeking peace with the Afghans. Hence, Akbar made elaborate preparations and set out for Bengal, on Sunday, 15th June 1574. He reached Kori, a dependency of Jaunpur, on the 28th. Hajipur and Patna were soon captured, and the victory was expressed in the chronogram *Mulk-i-Suleiman zi Daud raft* (H. 983—3rd August 1574). A more decisive battle was, however, fought at Tukaroi, (on the Suvarnarekha river) on 3rd March 1575. Daud formally submitted on 12th April, and peace was temporarily secured. Leaving Orissa to the Afghans, Akbar returned to Fatehpur Sikri. But Raja Todar Mall, perceiving the insincerity of the enemy, had refused to sign the treaty with Daud. His fears were justified when the treacherous Afghan again rebelled. Akbar once more marched towards Bengal; but before he reached his destination, the head of Daud was presented to him by the provincial troops. "From that period", according to the *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, "the dominion of Hindusthan departed from the Afghans, and their dynasty was extinguished for ever, in lieu of which arose the star of Akbar Shah's supremacy over the whole country." The independent kingdom of Bengal, which had lasted for about 236 years, perished along with Daud, "the dissolute scamp who knew nothing of the business of governing" (Smith). Orissa was eventually subdued by Raja Man Singh, in 1592. It continued to be a Mughal *subah* until its capture by the ubiquitous Marathas, from Alivardi Khan, in 1751.

The eastern end of the Mughal Empire being thus settled, it now remains for us to consider the North-West region and the Deccan. We shall begin with the former. The main cause of Akbar's attention being drawn to the N.W. frontier was the behaviour of his step-brother, Mirza Muhammad Hakim. We have noted how Kabul had been left in his charge, together with Kandahar, when Humayun turned to the reconquest of Hindusthan, in 1554. The Persians captured Kandahar (over which they really had a claim*) in 1558. The Mughals were obliged to acquiesce in its loss until its Persian governor, Muzaffar Husain

* Humayun had received Persian assistance in the capture of Kandahar and had agreed to surrender it to Shah Tahmasp, but did not fulfil that promise.

Mirza, in order to save himself from the Uzbeks, surrendered it to Akbar in April 1595. Jahangir again lost it in 1622; Shah Jahan temporarily recovered it in 1638, only to lose it finally in 1649.

Mirza Hakim, though a drunken sot and an incompetent ruler, shared the family trait of the Chaghatais, viz., incontinent ambition. In 1581—a year of crisis all round in Akbar's dominions, as we shall see later—he rose in revolt at the instigation of scheming persons like the Khwaja Mansur, *Diwan* of the Empire. Akbar marched against him in person, and reached Kabul on 9th August 1581. After a short but vigorous campaign he returned to Delhi, having defeated Hakim, early in December. Kabul was formally annexed to the Empire after the death of the Mirza in July 1585. Kashmir surrendered to the Mughals in 1586. Sind and Baluchistan were conquered in 1591 and 1595 respectively.

If the Chitor expedition of Akbar was "the most famous and tragically interesting", his Deccan campaign was the most fateful. Protected by the double wall of the Vindhya and Satpura ranges and the twin moats of the Narmada and Tapti rivers, the southern plateau appeared marked out by nature to be independent. The Mauryas, in ancient times, and the Khaljis and Tughlaqs in the medieval age, had pushed their boundaries far into the South—but only for a time. The compulsory withdrawal of the northern power from the Deccan during the fifteenth century was also accompanied by the rise of two new States in the peninsula: Vijayanagar (1336) and Bahmani (1347). The latter had split up into five petty kingdoms by the time the Mughals entered India. Kalimulla, the last of the Bahmani Sultans, sought the assistance of Babur against his own usurping *amirs*. But Babur, like Balban before and Sher Shah after him, wisely desisted from stretching his arms beyond the Vindhyas. Humayun's Gujarat adventure was ephemeral. Still, North India could not contain Akbar's boundless energies. Hence, he turned to the Deccan almost inevitably.

• In 1565 the Deccani Sultans had combined for the last time to overthrow Vijayanagar. After that exhausting holocaust, they settled down to a chronic and suicidal internecine struggle. It was into this nest of civil strife that Akbar sent his Imperial emissaries* to demand their loyal submission, in August 1591. Two years later, however, the ambassadors returned disappointed. Only

* Faizi, Abul Fazl's brother, to Asir and Burhanpur; Khwaja Aminu-d-din to Ahmadnagar; Mir Md. Amin Mashudi to Bijapur; and Mirza Masud to Golkonda.

Raja Ali Khan, ruler of Khandesh, appeared to be friendly towards the Emperor. Consequently, he is described as "a man of great talent, just, wise, prudent and brave". His territory, as we noted before, held the key-fortress of Asirgarh, "justly regarded as one of the strongest and best equipped fortresses in Europe and Asia" (Smith). But lack of internal harmony deprived the Deccan of all other advantages. Burhan-ul-Mulk of Ahmadnagar died in 1594. His successor was killed in battle by the Bijapuris in 1595. Some Ahmadnagar nobles appealed to Prince Murad in Gujarat for assistance. By that time, he had already received orders from Akbar to proceed into the Deccan. When the Imperialists actually entered, under the command of Murad and Khan-i-khanan Abdur-Rahman Khan (son of Bairam Khan), the Deccanis realised what Mughal intervention meant. Like Babur in the North Indian milieu, they came to stay.

Like Rana Pratap and Rani Durgawati in the North, there were in Ahmandnagar, at this time, two heroic spirits. They were Malik Ambar and Chand Bibi. The former came into greater prominence during the reign of Jahangir. The latter defended Ahmadnagar "with masculine resolution", as Ferishta (the contemporary historian) tells us. She wrote letters to Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur and Qutb Shah of Golkonda for assistance. At the end of three months, "Chand Bibi appeared with a veil on her head: She got guns to be brought to bear on the assailants, and stones to be hurled on them, so that they were repulsed in several repeated attacks. During the night, she stood by the workmen, and caused the breach to be filled up nine feet, before daylight, with wood, stones, and carcasses." The Bijapuri and Qutbshahi reinforcements appeared to be on their way; a pestilence also broke out. Hence the Mughal forces temporarily withdrew, after having secured the cession of Berar by negotiations. An Imperial outpost was established at Shahpur (1596). But hostilities again broke out, and a stiff fight took place at Supa (on the Godavari) in 1597. In order to pursue the advantages gained, and to divert his mind from the grief caused by the death of Prince Murad (in 1598) the Emperor personally came into the Deccan. Prince Daniyal and Khan-i-Khanan were already there. Chand Bibi again came to the fore. After the death of Raja Ali (in the battle of Supa) his son Bahadur Khan turned hostile and occupied Asirgarh. A double offensive was, therefore, organised: Daniyal and Khan-i-Khanan marched against Ahmadnagar, while Akbar concentrated on Asirgarh. To cut a long story short, both were victorious. Ahmadnagar fell on 19th

August 1600, and Asirgarh was captured on 17th January, 1601. "Chand Bibi, the only capable leader, was either murdered or constrained to take poison." Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur and Qutb Shah of Golkonda sent embassies to Akbar in order to conciliate him. The former also gave his daughter in marriage to Prince Daniyal. After this, Akbar returned to Agra in triumph, about May 1601. Khandesh, Berar, and Ahmadnagar were incorporated within the Mughal Empire. Prince Daniyal died early in 1604, and Akbar followed him on Thursday, 27th October, 1605.

3. Losses and Gains

(e) Jahangir

The twenty-two years of the reign of Jahangir (1605-27) and the thirty of Shah Jahan's (1627-57) witnessed the important loss of Kandahar (1622) and certain striking gains like the submission of Mewar (1614) and further penetration into the Deccan. There were several revolts which were suppressed; these are dealt with in the next chapter. The capture of Kangra or Nagarkot (N.E. Punjab, at the foot of the Himalayas), in 1620, which is recorded with great pride and warmth in Jahangir's autobiography (*Waqiat-i-Jahangiri*), was inconsequential. That feeling was born of the failure to take it in the previous reign (1573). Nonetheless, the reference is worth quoting:

It is unanimously declared by all persons acquainted with the history of the ancient *Rajas*, that from the beginning up to this time, it has always remained in the possession of one and the same family. The fact is also confirmed by the histories of the Muhammadan kings who have reigned in this country. From A. H. 720, or the commencement of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din's power, to the year 963, when the Emperor Akbar became master of the whole country of Hindusthan, the fort has been besieged no less than 52 times by the most powerful kings and rulers, but no one has been able to take it

It was destined to fall into the hands of the mighty army of the Emperor Jahangir, under the influence of whose prosperous star, all difficulties were overcome and all obstacles removed.

This task was really the achievement of Raja Bikramajit, acting under the command of Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan). So, too, were most of the gains during Jahangir's regime the result of Khurram's military ability. The greatest of these was, of course, the subjugation of Mewar in 1614. It will be recollected that Akbar had deputed Man

Singh and Prince Selim, in 1599, to complete the conquest of Mewar, taking advantage of the death of Rana Pratap in 1597. Jahangir now (1606) renewed those efforts by sending Prince Parvez and Asaf Khan (not the brother of Nur Jahan, but another named Jaffar Beg). But, presently, "all was stopped by the unhappy outbreak of Khusru", writes Jahangir. The next expedition was dispatched under Mahabat Khan, two years later (1608), but it proved equally abortive. Then in 1609 Abdullah Khan made such a dash on Rana Amar Singh that the latter came very near to losing his life. However, little was accomplished as affairs in the Deccan called for Abdullah's transfer to the South. His successors having proved worse than useless, Prince Khurram returned to the charge in 1614. He led the campaign with such consummate ability that Jahangir was enabled to write: "Rana Amar Singh, and his ancestors, relying upon the security of his mountains and his home had never shown obedience; but now, in my fortunate reign, he had been compelled to make his submission." It was stipulated, that the Rana should never rebuild Chitor; his son Karan was enrolled as a *mansabdar* of 5,000 *zat* and *sawar*; and life-size equestrian statues of Amar and Karan were placed, in the palace garden at Agra in view of the *Jharoka**. Karan was assigned a place "in the right hand of the circle in the *darbar* and presented with a superb dress of honour and a jewelled sword." Yet, all this was little compensation for the real loss of freedom. Amar failed to redeem the sacred oath he had taken at his heroic father's death. So he abdicated in favour of his son, and died with the consolation that he himself never served under the Turk; and the Ranas of Chitor never sent a Sisodia bride into the Mughal seraglio. Their descendants, to this day, observe "the ritual of mourning" at the irreparable loss sustained by the House of Bappa Rawal.

As in Rajputana, so too in the Deccan, Jahangir merely carried forward the imperial policy of Akbar. The conquest of Ahmadnagar and the capture of Asirgarh were token triumphs, more or less. So long as the redoubtable Malik Ambar was alive, the Mughals could only technically call the Deccan their own. Princes of the blood royal and Imperial Generals of renown were dispatched to Ahmadnagar in succession by Jahangir from 1608. We have no space here to tell of all their fatuous campaigns. Eventually, in 1616, Prince Khurram was appointed to the southern

* Akbar, too, had erected statues to honour the gallant heroes of Chitor, Jai Mall and Patta.

command. He started from Ajmer in October 1616; next month he was honoured with the title of *Shah* or 'King' "which no Timurid Prince had ever received". Jahangir himself followed, on 10th November. Their grand progress has been vividly described by Terry (Sir Thomas Roe's chaplain) who was an eye-witness. They reached Mandu on 6th March 1617. The expedition was a triumphal success. Malik Ambar temporarily submitted, delivered the keys of Ahmadnagar, and ceded the Balaghat to the Imperialists. Like Julius Caesar, Prince Khurram could declare: "*Veni, vidi, vici!*" He was now raised to the unprecedented rank of 30,000 *zat* and *sawar*, and designated *Shah Jahan* or 'World Ruler'. Nevertheless, real success was not commensurate with the pageant. Malik Ambar practically won back, in 1620, all that he had ceded. Shah Jahan once more appeared in the South (1621), and similar results followed. In 1623, a dispute between Bijapur and Ahmadnagar called for Imperial intervention. Mahabat Khan (the Mughal general) preferred an alliance with the former, and war with Ahmadnagar continued. But in the midst of the hostilities, both Malik Ambar and Jahangir died, in 1626 and 1627 respectively. The following obituary notice of the great Abyssinian, by the Imperial Chronicler, Muttamad Khan, speaks for itself:

Intelligence now arrived of the death of Ambar the Abyssinian, in the 80th year of his age, on 31st *Urdibihist* (14th May 1626). This Ambar was a slave, but an able man. In warfare, in command, in sound judgment, and in administration, he had no rival or equal. He well understood the predatory (*kazzaki*) warfare, which in the language of the Dakhni is called *bargi-giri*. He kept down the turbulent spirits of that country, and maintained his exalted position to the end of his life, and closed his career in honour. History records no other instance of an Abyssinian slave arriving at such eminence (E.&D., vi, 428-9).

Ambar had struggled in vain to unite the Deccani Sultanates in order to roll back the tide of Imperial invasions. Like Sher Shah before him, he declared to Ibrahim Adil Shah: "It is my design to fight the Mughal troops so long as life remains in my body. It may be that through Your Majesty's ever increasing fortune, I shall expel the Mughals from the Deccan." But this was not to be. Bijapur joined the Imperial aggressor. Ambar, nevertheless, won a resounding victory over the combined forces at Bhatayadi in October 1624; but it was only a military triumph without political gains. The balance turned against the South-

erners more and more, after the death of Ambar, as we shall presently see.

As if to counteract these gains, or prospects of gains, in the Deccan, Jahangir sustained the greatest loss of the Empire on the recapture of Kandahar by the Persians in 1622. This was the culmination of a long series of consummate manoeuvres on the part of the capable Shah Abbas (1587-1629). Jahangir could do little because of his internal preoccupations*. Minor gains made in other quarters could hardly compensate for this Imperial calamity.

In 1611, Raja Kalyan, son of Raja Todar Mall, had captured Khurda (Puri) in Orissa with its famous temple of Jagannath from Raja Purushottam Dev. Kamrup or Western Assam was acquired in 1612. In 1615, Khokara in Bihar was taken from its ruler Durjan Sal; this place was very rich in diamonds. In 1617, Purushottam Dev of Khurda, having rebelled, was finally put down, and his territory was annexed to the Empire by Mukarram Khan, governor of Orissa. This brought the Mughal frontier in that quarter to the borders of Golkonda. In 1620-22, Kishtwar, to the south of Kashmir, which was rich in fruits and saffron, was conquered and annexed. Though very small in extent, that principality yielded an annual revenue of Rs. 1,00,000.

(f) Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan ascended the throne of Jahangir in 1627, exactly a century after Babur's victory over Rana Sanga at Khanua. This inheritance devolved on him the legacy of the Imperial conquests extending from Central Asia in the North to the Deccan in the South. Shah Jahan's own efforts, during a quarter-century, therefore, were a continuation of the policies and ambitions of his predecessors. His major Imperial wars were fought at the two extreme ends indicated above. Other military operations, conducted within India, were part of the work of internal consolidation described in the next chapter.

Chronologically, the first great success of Shah Jahan was the recovery of Kandahar in 1638. On account of its strategic position and importance for trade, that city was a perpetual bone of contention between the Mughals and the Persians. Its loss in 1622 had dealt a great blow at the prestige of the Indian Empire. Shah Jahan was, indeed, lucky in being able to reoccupy it by buying over its com-

* See S. R. Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India*, pp. 338-90 (1947 ed.)

mandant, Ali Mardan Khan. The Khan was rewarded with riches as well as high offices, being made governor of Kabul and Kashmir at different times. He also served on the Central Asian campaign which Shah Jahan undertook before he lost Kandahar, finally, in 1648.

The lure of Samarqand, the city of Timur, had not died with Babur and Humayun. Akbar, too, had contemplated the recovery of Balkh, Badakhshan, and his other ancestral dominions. At this time, the kingdom of Bokhara (including Balkh and Badakhshan) was ruled by Nazr Muhammad Khan who had a dispute with his son Abdul Aziz. Taking advantage of this, Shah Jahan sent an expedition in 1645 under Prince Murad and Ali Mardan Khan, pretending to settle the quarrel between them. They entered the city of Balkh on 2nd July 1646, almost without opposition. The Indian forces held the region for some time, as Nazr Muhammad fled to Persia. But, very soon, the Uzbeks renewed their attacks vigorously. Prince Aurangzeb took his brother's place on 27th May 1647; but he too was compelled to abandon it not long after. Simultaneously, the Mughal position in Kandahar, too, became untenable. In the winter of 1648 the Persians attacked it in force, and the Indian garrison was compelled to capitulate on 11th February 1649. Aurangzeb and Sadullah Khan were immediately dispatched with a mandate for its recovery. They invested the fort from 16th May to 3rd September 1649, but failed to take it. Three years later, the attempt was renewed with more elaborate preparations (from 2nd May to 9th July 1652), under the same commanders. Nevertheless, the outcome was equally disappointing. Finally, Dara Shukoh, Shah Jahan's eldest and favourite son, was sent on the same errand, with the resounding title of *Shah Buland Iqbal* or 'King of Lofty Fortune'. He besieged Kandahar, from 23rd April to 27th September 1653, but could not establish the Mughal title to it. Consequently, the Mughals had to reconcile themselves to its permanent loss, after having wasted 12 crores of rupees on these vain adventures. But, in the Deccan, they met with better fortune.

Mughal ambitions in the South were not very much affected by the temporary interruptions caused by the death of Jahangir and the scramble for his throne in 1627. Internal weaknesses since the death of Malik Ambar encouraged the enemies of Ahmadnagar to persist in their designs: they were local no less than imperial. Fath Khan, the unworthy son of Malik Ambar, sold Daulatabad to the Mughals and treacherously murdered his own nominal master, Sultan Nizam-ul-Mulk, in 1631. Ahmadnagar was

reannexed to the Empire in 1633. Shahji, father of Shivaji, made one last heroic effort to recover its independence; but he, too, finally failed in 1636. Fath Khan entered Mughal service, and Shahji that, of Adil Shah of Bijapur.

Shah Jahan's Deccan campaign of 1636 was the most fruitful. We have noted before that, since the annexation of Orissa in 1617, the Mughal boundary ran along side of Golkonda in the north-west of that kingdom. In 1629, Bakir Khan, the Imperial governor of Orissa, attacked the border fortress of Mansurgarh and took it. In the following year, Naziri Khan (another Mughal general) captured Kandhar and occupied nearly a third of the territory of Telingana (Andhradesh). Abdullah Qutb Shah was too intimidated to resist. During the Ahmadnagar campaigns, therefore, no assistance could be expected from that quarter by the beleaguered city. On the contrary, when Abdul Latif, the Mughal envoy to Golkonda, approached Qutb-ul-Mulk, the *Padshah-nama* states, the Sultan "came forth five Kos to receive him and conducted him to the city with great honour. He had the *Khutba* read aloud in the name of the Emperor; he several times attended when the *Khutba* was read, and he had coins struck in the Emperor's name, and sent specimens of them to the Court". Such obsequious behaviour was a great source of relief to the Imperialists. Bijapur showed better spirit, but only for a time.

Shah Jahan entered the Deccan for the last time, on 21st February 1636, owing to a series of happenings there. Shahji, undaunted by Fath Khan's surrender of Daulatabad to the Imperialists, had confidently continued the struggle for the independence of Ahmadnagar. In October 1634, Khan-i-Khanan Mahabat Khan died a disappointed man owing to his failures in the Deccan campaigns. His successor, Khan Dauran, was unable fully to cope with the situation created by the combination between Shahji and Bijapur. Shah Jahan, therefore, personally came to the Deccan in order to tackle this situation. Fortunately for him, Bijapur was torn with internal squabbles. By a combination of military manoeuvres and diplomatic intrigues, he succeeded in detaching Adil Shah from Shahji. On 6th May 1636, a treaty was signed between the Emperor and Adil Shah, by which Adil Shah undertook to give up, and, if need be, fight Shahji, in return for a share in the Nizamshahi territories. A similar engagement was made in June with Golkonda. Shah Jahan returned to Agra in July 1636. Shahji was forced to surrender at Mahuli (in the Konkan) in November the same year.

After Shah Jahan's return to the North, Aurangzeb took charge of the viceroyalty of the Deccan. It comprised,

at that stage, Khandesh, Berar, Telingana, Daulatabad, and Ahmadnagar, and included within it 64 strong forts. Its estimated annual revenue was five *crores* of rupees. How Aurangzeb improved this vast territory by his wise and efficient administration, during his first viceroyalty (1636-44), is described later. From the point of view of conquest, his second viceroyalty (1653-57) proved more fruitful. This was due, in no small measure, to the assistance he received from Mir Jumla, the Persian merchant-adventurer, who had become minister at Golkonda. Quarrelling with his master, he invited Aurangzeb's intervention, in 1656, which culminated in the siege of Golkonda by Mughal forces. A pretext was found in the arrears of tribute due from the Qutb Shah. However, the siege was raised on 30th March 1656 at Shah Jahan's dictation. Aurangzeb's son, Prince Muhammad Sultan, married Qutb Shah's daughter (with the secret understanding that he was to inherit his father-in-law's throne); the district of Rangir, including Manikdurg and Chinoor, was ceded to the Empire; and Mir Jumla entered Mughal service with the title of 'Muazzam Khan' and rank of 6,000. On the death of Sadullah Khan, he became prime minister of Shah Jahan. Mir Jumla, with his intimate knowledge of the Deccan, was of great service to Aurangzeb in his campaign against Bijapur.

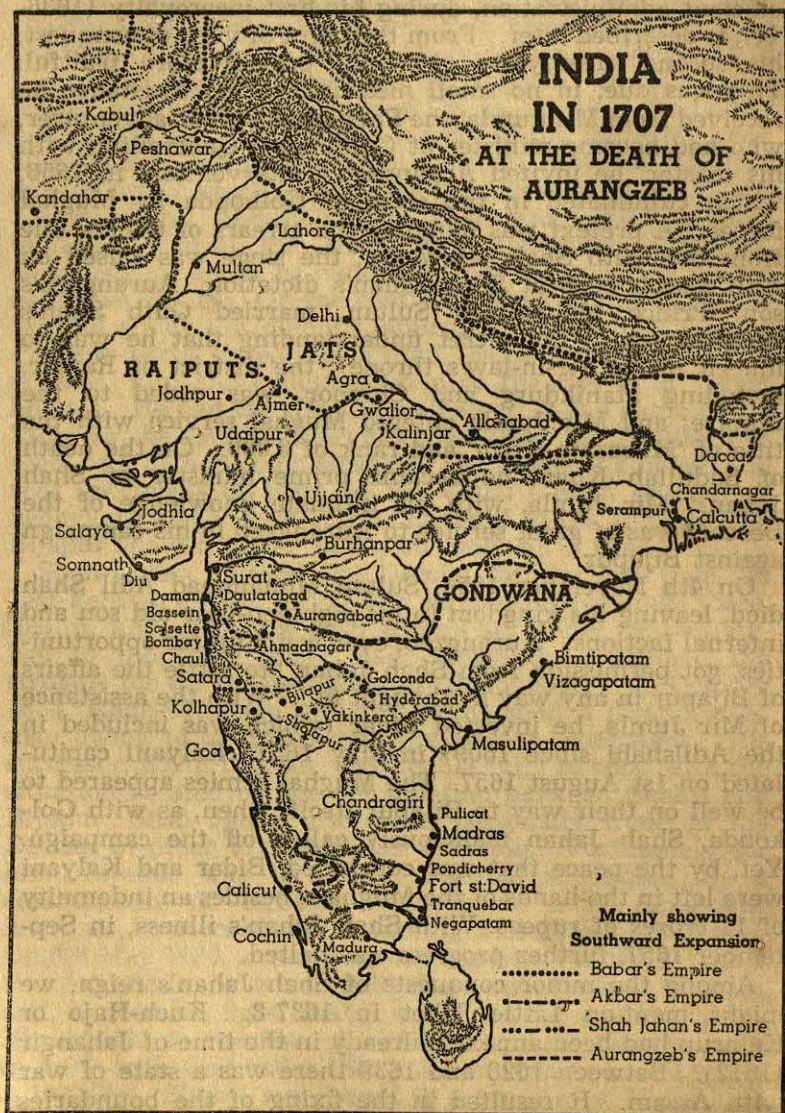
On 4th November 1656, Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah died, leaving his kingdom to his eighteen-year old son and internal factions. Aurangzeb, ever watchful for opportunities, got permission from Shah Jahan "to settle the affairs of Bijapur in any way he thought fit". With the assistance of Mir Jumla, he invested Bidar (which was included in the Adilshahi since 1609) in May 1657. Kalyani capitulated on 1st August 1657. The Mughal armies appeared to be well on their way to Bijapur itself, when, as with Golkonda, Shah Jahan maliciously called off the campaign. Yet, by the peace that was concluded, Bidar and Kalyani were left in the hands of the Mughals, besides an indemnity of 1½ *crores* of rupees. With Shah Jahan's illness, in September 1657, further progress was halted.

Among the minor conquests of Shah Jahan's reign, we might mention Little Tibet in 1637-8. Kuch-Hajo or Kamrup had been annexed already in the time of Jahangir (1612). Between 1628 and 1639 there was a state of war with Assam. It resulted in the fixing of the boundaries between Assam and the Mughal Empire, and the resumption of peaceful relations for the nonce. We shall consider the details of this situation in the following section.

4. Climax and Perils

(g) Aurangzeb

The long reign of Aurangzeb, covering half-a-century



(1658-1707), was a period of climax and perils. Within India, the Empire had never before extended to the points

reached at the close of this epoch. The Deccani Sultanates of Bijapur (1686) and Golkonda (1687) were absorbed within the Mughal dominions; and the southern boundary of the Empire ran from Sira (in Tumkur District, Mysore) to Ginji (N.E. of Pondicherry), in 1698. In the North-East, Western Assam was re-annexed in 1663, and Sondip and Chatgaon (Chittagong) were taken in 1665-6. But this climax of territorial expansion was fraught with perils which engulfed the Mughal Empire, not long after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. We shall begin with the Assam frontier.

The present ruling dynasty of Kuch-Bihar was founded by Vishwa Singh (1515-40). It was on account of the opportunities created by the quarrels within this family that Jahangir was able, in 1612, to extend the Mughal dominion into Kuch-Hajo (Goalpara and Kamrup districts of W. Assam). This brought the Empire into conflict with the Ahoms of Assam. We noted how there was a state of war between the two (1628-39) in the reign of Shah Jahan. The boundary, defined in the peace which followed, ran along Bar Nadi in the Upper Brahmaputra valley and west of Asurar Ali, farther south. But when the War of Succession started in the Imperial house in 1657, the Ahoms reoccupied Gauhati, the capital of Kamrup, and drove out the Mughal officers. It was not till the end of 1661 that the redoubtable Mir Jumla (appointed viceroy of Bengal in place of Shuja) led a vigorous campaign "to punish the lawless zamindars of the province, especially those of Assam and Magh (Arakan)". It cost the belligerents more than pen can describe, in men, money and *materiel*, but the Ahoms were made to feel the might of the Mughal Empire. The greatest loss on the Imperial side, however, was that of its general Mir Jumla. Worn out by the strain of war in the most difficult terrain, during the height of the rainy season, the Khan-i-khanan died on his way back to Dacca, on 31st March 1663. "No other general of that age", writes Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "conducted war with so much humanity and justice, nor kept his soldiers, privates and captains alike, under such discipline; no other general could have retained to the last the confidence and even affection of his subordinates amidst such appalling sufferings and dangers. The owner of 20 maunds of diamonds, viceroy of the rich province of Bengal, he shared with the meanest soldier the privations of the march and brought premature death on himself by scorning delights and living laborious days. He issued strict orders forbidding plunder, rape and oppression of the people, and saw to it that his orders were obeyed."

The gain of the Mughals, apart from the treasures obtained, was the annexation of Assam to the west of Bharali and Kallang rivers—including more than half the province of Darrang which was rich in elephants. These gains were enjoyed by the Mughals until 1667, when the new Ahom King Chakradwaj (1663-70) once more attacked his imperial neighbours, reoccupied Gauhati and pushed the Mughal frontier back to the Monas river. In 1669, Ram Singh (son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh) arrived at Rangamati and laid siege to Gauhati, but was obliged to fall back on his base in March 1671. He retired from this impossible situation in 1676. Nevertheless, temporarily, the Mughals benefited from the confusion which overtook the Ahom kingdom on the death of Chakradwaj (1670-81). In February 1679, Bar Phukan betrayed Gauhati into the hands of the imperialists, for fear of his rival Burha Gohain. But when the determined Gadadhar Singh ascended the Ahom throne in 1681, much of Kamrup was lost to the Empire once again. During the viceroyalty of Aurangzeb's uncle, Shayista Khan, however, civil war overtook the Ahoms, and the Mughals made capital out of the situation. They annexed, once more, the present districts of Rangpur and Western Kamrup, and the Raja confirmed these gains by treaty in 1711. Other valuable acquisitions made by Shayista Khan were Sondip (in 1665) and Chatgaon (in 1666). Important military and naval outposts were established here to put down the pirates of Arakan, whose depredations were a source of constant danger to the inhabitants. The latter place was renamed Islamabad, as Gauhati was called Alamgirnagar by Mir Jumla.

The reduction of the Shia States of the Deccan—Bijapur and Golkonda—was deemed necessary for a variety of reasons: it was a consummation devoutly wished for. (i) Aurangzeb had been baulked of his prey in the moment of triumph by the perversity of his father in 1656-7; (ii) the internal weaknesses of the two States was such as to tempt any strong neighbour to grab their territories; e.g. Ali Adil Shah II had been succeeded by his infant son Sikandar (4 years old) in November 1672; (iii) the Deccanis—Golkonda, Bijapur and the Marathas—were showing dangerous inclinations to come together in order to counteract their inherent drawbacks; (iv) as Shias, Bijapur and Golkonda were obnoxious heretics to be uprooted in the interests of the True Faith; (v) lastly, the situation *vis-a-vis* the Marathas was quite baffling in spite of Shivaji's death in 1680; and strategy demanded a total war against them. The extinction of Bijapur and Golkonda as independent States would put immense

resources and advantages into the hands of the Mughals. The Marathas could then be hemmed in between the Imperialists and the sea and squeezed out.

A series of contemporary events also led Aurangzeb inevitably to the South. His rebellious and latitudinarian son Akbar had fled into the Deccan, and Sambhaji (son of Shivaji) had given him asylum. Ajit Singh and Durga Das had also followed the same course.* The war against the Marathas was not progressing well under the viceroyalty of his son Muazzam (later Shah Alam or Bahadur Shah). There were arrears, too, to be collected from the Sultans of the Deccan. Ultimatums sent to the two States had not yielded the desired results. Hence, a war of extermination appeared to be the only course open.

Aurangzeb left Ajmer on 8th September, 1681. He was at Ahmadnagar on 13th November 1682. He never returned to North India again; for he was buried at Khuldabad (near Daulatabad) in February 1707—after a reign of fifty years, half of which was spent in exhausting campaigns in the South. "Looking collectively at the Mughal gains in the Deccan during the first twenty years of Aurangzeb's reign", writes Sarkar, "we find that he had in 1657 annexed Kalyani and Bidar in the north-eastern corner of the kingdom of Bijapur; the fort and district of Parenda in the extreme north had been gained by bribery in 1660; Sholapur had been acquired by treaty in July 1668; and now Naldurg and Kulbarga were annexed. Thus, the vast tract of land enclosed by the Bhima and the Manjra eastwards, up to an imaginary line joining Kulbarga to Bidar (77 degrees E. Long.), passed into Mughal hands, and the Imperial boundary on the south reached the north bank of the Bhima, opposite Halsangi, within striking distance of Bijapur city—while south-eastwards it touched Malkhed, the fortress on the western border of the kingdom of Golkonda."

The siege of Bijapur began on 1st April 1685. It had been preceded by the softening process of diplomatic casuistry, threats, and the devastation of the surrounding country. Dilir Khan roamed about the land like a wild wolf: "villages in his path were utterly sacked; all their men, both Hindus and Muslims, were taken prisoners for being sold into slavery; and the women committed suicide by jumping into the wells with their children..." On Sunday, 12th September 1686, the Bijapuris submitted, after nearly eighteen months of desperate resistance. At one o'clock in the afternoon, the last of the Adilshahi

* Ch. III, section 5 below.

Sultans, Sikandar, bowed his proud head before Aurangzeb at Rasulpur. "His subjects, with tears and lamentations, lined up the streets of Bijapur as he marched past." He now became a mere 'Khan' with an annuity of one *lakh* of rupees; but in reality a prisoner in Daulatabad fort. After his release, he died at Satara on 3rd April 1700, hardly thirty-two years of age. His kingdom had been in existence for nearly 200 years.

The fall of the Qutbshahi was now only a question of days. Its last ruler, Abdul Hasan, had, to quote the Imperial historian Khafi Khan, "entrusted the government of his kingdom to Madanna and Akanna, two infidels, who were bitter enemies of the Mussalmans, and brought great and increased troubles from them. The king himself was given up to luxury, drinking, and debauchery." Peace was offered to him on the following terms: "Abul Hasan must express regret for his offences and ask forgiveness. He must remove Madanna and Akanna from the management of affairs, and place them in confinement. The parganas of Siram, Ramgir, etc., which had been taken by force upon unjust grounds, from the possession of servants of the Imperial throne, must be restored. The balance of tribute due must be forwarded without delay."

The proud Abul Hasan Qutb Shah refused to be brow-beaten and bullied. Consequently, Hyderabad was harried and Golkonda besieged. On 28th January 1687 Aurangzeb was within two miles of that fortress. Regular siege operations commenced on 7th February. "Before break of day, the Imperial forces attacked the city, and a frightful scene of plunder and destruction followed; for in every part and road and market there were *lakhs* upon *lakhs* of money, stuffs, carpets, horses, elephants, belonging to Abul Hasan and his nobles. Words cannot express (writes Khafi Khan) how many women and children of Mussalmans and Hindus were made prisoners, and how many women of high and low degree were dishonoured; carpets of great value which were too heavy to carry were cut to pieces with swords and daggers, and every bit was struggled for." The fort was betrayed by Abdullah Pani, a fortune-hunting Pathan. Though the valiant Abdur Razzak fought like Chand Bibi at Ahmadnagar, he was terribly wounded and overpowered. Still, he declared: "No one who had eaten the salt of Abul Hasan and thriven on his bounty could enter the service of Alamgir." The defenders capitulated on 21st September 1687. Abul Hasan surrendered himself with dignity; his parting from his family and people was pathetic in the extreme. He sighed out his last days as a prisoner in Daulatabad fort. The Imperial loot amounted

to a total in *dams* of 'one *arb*, fifteen *crores*, sixteen *lakhs* and a fraction, which was the sum entered on the records.'

The struggle of the Mughals with the Marathas, which is described in another chapter, dragged on beyond the days of Aurangzeb. It was full of perils to the Mughal Empire. Nevertheless, Aurangzeb had the passing satisfaction of having executed Sambhaji (11th March 1689), captured his son Shahu and taken Raigad, the capital of Shivaji (on 19th October 1690)—besides occupying several other Maratha strongholds, including Ginji. The last was besieged by the Mughal forces from September 1690 to 8th January 1698—one of the longest sieges in history. Levying tribute from even Trichinopoly and Tanjore, further south, during this period of utmost success, the Mughal Empire reached the acme of its territorial expansion. For a time, at least, in 1694, Zulfiqar Khan, the Mughal general, had been able to overawe Shahji II of Tanjore and secure from him the cession of the forts of Palamkota, Sittanur, and Tanganur with their dependent districts. Trichinopoly had already submitted to the Mughals.

NOTE: ON MUGHAL BOUNDARIES

(See Map on page 66).

Since the conquests of Babur and Humayun, though large, did not last, and those of Sher Shah proved equally ephemeral, the real history of the Indian Empire may be considered to have commenced with Akbar. After Aurangzeb, that Empire once again disrupted. Hence, its maximum duration in time, when it was vigorous and growing without a break, was 150 years, from 1557-1707. During this period the maximum effective dominion may be said to have included only Kabul outside our present boundaries, towards the N.W., and Western Assam down to Chittagong, towards the N.E. Within these limits, it comprised the whole of Hindusthan (including parts of Baluchistan)—from Kashmir and the Himalayas (excluding Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim), and the whole of the Deccan and East Carnatic, excluding the Maratha territory which was west of a line running from Daman and Dharampur, through Junnar and Indapur, to Belgaum and Karwar. A Maratha corridor also existed along the direct line running from Belgaum to Bangalore; thereafter there were pockets of Maratha possessions in Vellore, Arni, Ginji, and Tanjore in the delta of the Kaveri river. All territories north of these constituted the effective Mughal Empire in its best days. On the Maratha borders the frontiers were ever fluctuating. Their real character will be known when we

have discussed the Mughal-Maratha relations. It will be noted that the western and southern parts of the peninsula—roughly indicated by a line drawn from Mangalore through Mysore, to Tanjore—were left out of the Mughal dominions.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

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N.B.—Further details of campaigns and conquests may be read in the monographs on the Mughal Emperors cited later.

NOTE ON MUGHAL BOUNDARIES

(See Map on page 68.)

Since the conquests of Babur and Humayun, though later, did not last, and those of Sher Shah proved equally ephemeral, the real history of the Indian Empire may be considered to have commenced with Akbar. After Akbar's death, the Empire once again disrupted. Hence, its maximum duration in time, when it was vigorous and growing without a break, was 130 years, from 1557-1707. During this period the maximum effective dominion may be said to have included only Kabul, outside our present boundaries, towards the N.W., and Western Assam down to Chittagong, the whole of Hindustan (including parts of Baluchistan) from Kashmir and the Himalayas (excluding Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim), and the whole of the Deccan and part of the Maratha territory which was west of a line running from Daman and Diu through Junnar and Indapur to Belgaum and Karwar. A Maratha corridor also existed along the direct line running from Belgaum to Bangalore; thereafter there were pockets of Maratha possessions in Vellore, Arcot, Gingee and Tanjore to the delta of the Kaveri river. All territories north of these constituted the effective Mughal Empire in its heyday. On the Maratha borders the frontiers were ever fluctuating. Their real character will be known when we

CHAPTER THREE

CONSOLIDATION AND CULMINATION

1. *Introduction.* 2. *Suppression of Revolts:* (a) Mirzas, (b) Generals. (c) Afghans. (d) Rajputs. (e) Europeans. 3. *Achievement of Harmony:* (f) Din-e-Ilahi. 4. *Orthodoxy in the Saddle:* (g) Dar-ul-Islam.

1. Introduction

THE CENTRAL THEME of this book is the evolution of Modern India. For reasons explained in the general Introduction, we commenced our survey of this process with the advent of the Mughals. India reached at that time a new constructive phase towards: (i) Political Unification; (ii) Administrative Organisation; (iii) Social Harmony; (iv) Economic Progress; and (v) Cultural Efflorescence. These trends began with the sweeping away of medieval chaos and disunity of India and the creation, in its place, of the Mughal dominion. The establishment of a New Order necessarily involves the destruction of much that is old. So, the Mughals practically superseded the medieval political system: the older States were mostly overthrown or reduced to being subordinate feudatories. Eventually, not a single Muslim State was suffered to remain; the only Indian rulers of consequence were in Rajputana. Outside the Empire, the Marathas could not be overcome; and the remnants of the Vijayanagar Empire continued to survive beyond the territorial acquisitions of the Marathas, farther south. This was the state of India which resulted from the Mughal conquests described in the preceding chapter. But, after all, it was only a military achievement; and we have learnt from Babur's and Humayun's military exploits that the creation of a stable dominion involves more than mere triumphs of the battlefield.

In the first place, the conqueror must stay sufficiently long in the saddle to convince the turbulent and recalcitrant elements in the country that the sovereign cannot be effectively or easily challenged with impunity. In other words, he should be able, not only to conquer but also to retain his conquests. Babur, Humayun, and the Surs had not been able to do this. Akbar was the first ruler of the new dynasty who had the capacity to meet every challenge of circumstance and to overcome it. As a conqueror he showed inflexible determination. "A monarch," he said, "should be ever intent on conquest; otherwise, his neigh-

bours rise against him." This was quite true of his times. That attitude, outlook and energy, continued down to the days of Aurangzeb who also declared:

"It is bad for both Emperors and water to remain at the same place;
The water grows stagnant and the king's power slips out of his hands."

Babur, too, had advised Humayun: "The world is his who exerts himself. Fail not to acquit yourself strenuously to meet every emergency: indolence and ease agree ill with kingship." Akbar was a marvel of energy as he revealed in his second Gujarat campaign; such a tornado could not be resisted. Even the more self-indulgent Jahangir bestirred himself in good time and acted with effective vigour when his son Khusru rebelled. Shah Jahan failed to retain his throne because he had latterly fallen from the vigour of his earlier years. Aurangzeb succeeded because he acted more swiftly and struck harder than all the rest. A closer acquaintance with the biographies of the Emperors will show that the greatest among them were men of tireless energy. This was the secret of their success, both military and administrative.

The military task of the Emperors did not end with the conquest of kingdoms. There were frequent revolts to be suppressed, and recalcitrant elements to be ever kept well in hand. These troubles arose from monarchs who were overthrown or from their irrepressible officers and relations, as was the case with Jai Mall and Patta in the time of Akbar, and Ajit Singh and Durga Das in that of Aurangzeb. The revolts of the Pathans—Daud and Usman—in Bengal were also of the same nature. These rebellions had another significance as well, viz. as efforts on the part of suppressed nationalities to recover their lost independence, if not supremacy. The Afghans and the Rajputs were not to be easily assimilated. Then there were, too, the ambitious Mirzas or members of the ruling family, and, at times, Mughal generals who, for a variety of reasons, rose against their masters. Though the Mirzas seemed to disappear after Akbar's Gujarat campaigns, the revolts of Princes of the blood royal—like Hakim, Selim, Khusru, Khurram, Aurangzeb and Akbar—were of the same category. This was a canker in the Imperial family, inherited from the time of Babur's father Umer Sheikh (not to go beyond that), which was ultimately to prove disastrous. The rebellions of Bairam Khan, Khan Zaman, Mahabat Khan and Khan Jahan Lodi are the best known among those of the Imperial officers. Under Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, the activities of the Europeans were also

becoming more and more egregious and provocative. On the seas they were dangerous as pirates, and on land—the Portuguese—as religious fanatics. Troubles arose from both these causes, especially the former, owing to the weakness of the Mughal Empire. From the point of view of religious zeal, Aurangzeb himself provoked more hostilities than any one else: the Sikh, Jat, and Satnami risings were the direct outcome of it. The work of consolidation involved the suppression of all hostile elements arising from any cause whatsoever. The primary test of all governments, and the one by which they survive, is the ability to ride all storms. Happily, India had no foreign invasion to face during this epoch.

Next to this military requisite is the political capacity to organise an efficient administration. Both Babur and Humayun failed here. Sher Shah possessed great administrative genius, but he was not fortunate enough to have able successors to carry forward his good work. Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, together, achieved an administrative success whose effects long survived them. The nature of the mechanism they brought into existence, and the principles and lines on which they worked it, will be considered in some detail in the next chapter. But the success or failure of States does not depend upon mere mechanical or technical efficiency, any more than it does on mere military might. Their stability depends more on the internal harmony they are able to create and sustain. It depends on their powers of assimilation, their capacity to bridge the gulf between the rulers and the ruled, and the relations obtaining between various sections of the people. In modern times, these are the results of several factors, all of which did not exist under the Mughals. In their circumstances much depended on the character and personality of the Emperors. From this point of view, Akbar and Aurangzeb represented two different types, each great in his own way, but reacting differently on his subjects and the fortunes of the Empire. Jahangir and Shah Jahan stood midway between the two, in every sense of the term: the former retained some qualities of his father, and the latter foreshadowed those of his more gifted son. The forte of both Akbar and Aurangzeb was religious idealism, though the one helped forward, and the other hindered, the political unification of the country. For all their quaint medieval features, the ideals of *Din-e-Ilahi** and *Dar-ul-Islam** were equally powerful anticipations of the tendencies marking Modern India. We shall now exa-

* See (f) and (g) below.

mine, in some detail, the process of consolidation and assimilation which India passed through under the greater Mughals—from Akbar to Aurangzeb.

2. Suppression of Revolts

(a) The Mirzas

Family feuds are a curse at all times; for the Mughals they were a Damocles' sword hanging over their heads through successive generations. Not a reign passed without them. It is, indeed, a miracle that the Mughal Empire flourished for a century-and-a-half in spite of them. We have noticed how Kamran, Askari and Hindal troubled Humayun, until he was forced to adopt very drastic measures against them. Kamran's eyes were put out, in order to disable him from further mischief. Askari, appointed Governor of Gujarat, rebelled almost immediately. At his very accession, Humayun had to encounter a conspiracy to have him superseded by Mahdi *Khwaja*, Babur's brother-in-law. Lastly, he had to deal with the rebellious Md. Zaman Mirza, the eldest son-in-law of Babur, who took refuge in Gujarat. In spite of his earlier revolt, Humayun had appointed him Governor of Bihar; but he joined Md. Sultan Mirza, and once again created trouble in 1534. Humayun defeated them at the battle of Bhojpur and imprisoned them. Escaping from there, Md. Zaman became a tool of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Ultimately, he rejoined Humayun and played an inglorious part in the battle of Chausa in 1539, when he got drowned.

In the time of Akbar, again, the mischievous Mirzas popped up. They were in revolt at Sambhal, when Akbar's step-brother Mirza Hakim, Governor of Kabul, invaded the Punjab in November 1566. They were the sons of Md. Sultan Mirza. We have already noted the fate of Mirza Hakim, who died in July 1585. During the Gujarat campaign, Akbar had to fight a very stiff engagement with Ibrahim Husain Mirza at Sarnal in 1572. Ibrahim escaped, though wounded, but died in Multan the very next year. Another, Md. Husain Mirza, was also finished off at Ahmedabad in 1573. Shah Mirza, the last of the brood, became a homeless wanderer and was heard of no more. Yet Akbar's last days were clouded by the rebellion of Prince Selim, his heir-apparent. Sixteen years before the death of his great father, in 1591, Selim showed signs of an indecent hurry to take his place. The contemporary historian, Badauni, actually accuses him of having attempted to poison Akbar. In 1600, he was asked to proceed to Bengal for suppression of Usman Khan, but

he disobeyed, and himself rose in revolt at Allahabad. Akbar had to bring his Asirgarh campaign to a hasty conclusion in order to deal with his unfilial son. Selim had assumed royal insignia at Allahabad and struck coins in his own name. But the unkindest cut of all was that he also procured the murder of Abul Fazl. "If Selim wanted to be Emperor," Akbar cried, "he might have killed me and spared Abul Fazl." Nevertheless, the father in Akbar got the better of the king and judge, and Selim was finally reconciled.

During Akbar's last illness, there was an influential group favouring the succession of Selim's son Khusru in lieu of his father. Khusru, no doubt, had some amiable qualities, but his greatest recommendation was that he was the nephew of the powerful Man Singh. But Saiyid Khan, one of the senior nobles, declared: "This is contrary to the laws and customs of the Chaghatai Tatars, and shall never be." The frustration caused by this opposition found expression in open revolt in 1606. Jahangir, forgetting the irony of his own antecedents, remarked: "Khusru, influenced by the petulance and pride which accompany youth, by his want of experience and prudence, and by the encouragement of evil companions, got some absurd notions into his head.... They never reflected that sovereignty and government cannot be managed and regulated by men of limited intelligence. The Supreme Dispenser of Justice gives this high mission to those whom He chooses, and it is not everyone that can becomingly wear the robes of royalty. The vain dreams of Khusru and his foolish companions could end in nothing but trouble and disgrace." Within three weeks (April 1606) the rebellion was crushed, and the prince was defeated, imprisoned and blinded. The Sikh Guru Arjun was also executed for alleged complicity in the revolt, which consisted of no more than giving asylum to Khusru. The unfortunate prince eventually fell into the hands of his unscrupulous brother Khurram who got rid of him under very pathetic circumstances in 1621.

Khurram, now entitled 'Shah Jahan' (in reward for his Deccan campaigns), was the next prince to rebel. The entry of Nur Jahan (widow of Sher Afgan, married by Jahangir in 1611) was a source of powerful influence over the private and public life of the Emperor. He struck coins in her name associated with his own, and showed himself at the *Jharoka** along with her. Her father, Ghias Beg, a Persian fortune-hunter, had risen to be a great nobleman with the title of '*Itimad-ud-daula*'. Her brother, Asaf

* Window from which the Emperor gave audience to his subjects.

Khan, was also a capable officer, and his daughter (Mumtaj Mahal) was married to Prince Khurram. Nur Jahan's daughter (by Sher Afgan) was wedded to Prince Shahriyar. Hence, rivalry arose between the two in support of possible candidates for the throne. Nur Jahan tried to get Shah Jahan out of the way by sending him to Kandahar, ostensibly for its recovery (after its conquest by the Persians in 1622). But the prince chose to rebel. However, he was defeated by Mahabat Khan at Bilochpur on 29th March 1623. After traversing region after region of the Empire, winning temporary successes, particularly in the eastern provinces, Shah Jahan was ultimately obliged to surrender in 1626, giving up his two sons (Dara Shukoh and Aurangzeb) as hostages. Nevertheless, his adventures revealed the insecurity of the Imperial throne. Mahabat Khan, too, in his turn, supported the candidature of Prince Parvez, if only because Shah Jahan was out of favour, and Shahriyar (Nashudani) was the contemptible son of a concubine. He also hated the hold of the Nur Jahan junto over Jahangir. Hence he desperately attempted a *coup*, and even took the Emperor and Nur Jahan captive (March 1626). But he mismanaged the whole affair, lost heart, and gave up the prize. Parvez died on 28th October 1626, followed by Jahangir exactly one year later. Jahangir died on 28th October 1627. Shahriyar, who was stricken with leprosy, was defeated at Lahore, taken captive, and blinded — by Asaf Khan's forces on behalf of Shah Jahan who was then away in the Deccan. On learning of what had occurred in the North, Shah Jahan hastened to Agra. While still on his way, he issued a *firman* calling upon Asaf Khan to do away with Dawar Bakhsh, the son of the hapless Khusru, who had been temporarily raised to the throne as a stopgap pending Shah Jahan's return, and other princes, like Shahriyar, who were likely to be his rivals. They were, consequently, "all sent out of the world", on 23rd January 1628. Shah Jahan thus, virtually, ascended his throne over the corpses of his kinsmen on 4th February 1628. With ghastly cynicism, Md. Salih Kambu, the Imperial historian, wrote on the murder of Prince Khusru: It is entirely lawful for the great sovereigns to rid this mortal world of the existence of their brothers and other relations, whose very annihilation is conducive to common good. And as the leaders, spiritual and temporal, justify the total eradication of the rival claimants to the fortunate throne (therefore) on grounds of expediency, and common weal, and upon the suggestion of such wise counsellors....Khusru....was translated

... from the ditch of prison to the plains of non-existence.

Aurangzeb paid his father in the same coin, together with his brothers Murad, Dara Shukoh and some of their offspring. In fact, he wrote to Shah Jahan during his revolt: "How do you still regard the memory of Khusru and Parvez, whom you did to death before your accession, and who had threatened no injury to you?" The War of Succession, 1657-8, was therefore considered, with all its crimes, perfectly normal like, for instance, the monsoon. Shah Jahan fell ill early in September 1657. He formally nominated Dara Shukoh as his successor, in order to avert civil war. But Aurangzeb, "deep in counsel, crafty in action, and cool and calculating by nature", forestalled all. Dara was 43 years of age, Shuja 41, Aurangzeb 39, and Murad 33; the first was a latitudinarian—"a Gentile with Gentiles and a Christian with Christians" (Bernier); the second was a Shia; the third an orthodox Sunni; and the fourth an out and out hedonist. Dara was now virtually Emperor; the rest were Viceroys: Shuja in Bengal, Aurangzeb in the Deccan, and Murad in Gujarat. The eldest was very proud and irascible, the second was intelligent, the third consummate, and the last most gullible, 'intemperate and brainless.' On getting the news from Agra, Murad proclaimed himself independent king in Gujarat (5th December 1657); and Shuja did the same in Bengal (24th February 1658). Aurangzeb craftily confessed indifference to "the government of this deceitful and unstable world", but allied himself with Murad, on terms most advantageous to himself. What followed is full of pathos and tragedy. We may not dwell on the details here. The battles of Dharmat (14 miles S.W. of Ujjain) on 15th April 1658, and Samugarh (near Agra) on 29th May 1658, decided the main issue of the struggle. "Dara", writes Manucci, "had not sufficient experience in matters of war;... Aurangzeb proved himself to be by far the ablest of the princes in every phase of the contest." He entered Agra on 8th June 1658 and imprisoned his ailing father; and crowned himself hurriedly, at Delhi, on 21st July 1658. Dara was executed in May 1660, Murad in December 1661, and Suleiman Shukoh (son of Dara) in May 1662. "Aurangzeb", observes V.A. Smith, "like Henry VIII of England, preferred to kill his victims with all the forms of law when possible." Shah Jahan passed away in prison on 22nd January 1666.

We close this sordid story, for the present, with an account of the revolt of Prince Akbar, son of Aurangzeb, in Rajputana, in January 1681. He donned the Imperial robes with the blessings of the *Mullahs* who declared his

father deposed for "violation of the Islamic canon law"! Aurangzeb, however, was able to get the better of him by a ruse. Khafi Khan states: "For all the mighty force which Prince Akbar brought against his father, the sword was not drawn, and no battle was fought, but his army was completely broken; being utterly cast down, he took to flight." After lurking in Maharashtra for over five years—from June 1681 to February 1687—when Aurangzeb issued orders "to take him prisoner alive, if possible, if not, to kill him", he eventually escaped to Persia. Seven years later, he attempted an invasion of India, imitating Humayun, with a force of Persian cavalry 12,000 strong, but was repelled by his brother Muazzam near Multan in April 1694. "Akbar's rebellion," it has been well observed, "failed to change the sovereign of Delhi, but it brought unhopd for relief to the Maharana of Mewar."

(b) Generals

Considering the tendencies and temptations of the age, the Mughals were extremely lucky in having a number of brilliant servants who, on the whole, served them with fidelity. This will be better realised if it is recollected that, on the eve of the foundation of their power, the disruption of the Bahmani kingdom, which resulted in the creation of five independent principalities, had been occasioned by its insubordinate generals and ministers. Sher Shah and Hemu were equally sinister or inciting models; nor were the Chaghatai traditions in any sense different. Even slaves in India had risen to be Sultans. As Lane-Poole put it: "The son is a mere speculation. on the other hand the slave is 'the survival of the fittest'." In such circumstances, the road to dictatorship was more open to ability than to mere heredity. The success of the Mughal Emperors, therefore, must be attributed to their capacity to maintain the power and prestige of the sovereign over the heads of subjects and officers alike. When they failed in this, their dynasty also fell. Occasionally, though not frequently, that power was put to a severe test. We shall consider here a few prominent examples.

Akbar was just thirteen years of age when Humayun died. But, as we noticed, he was fortunate in having the support and services of Bairam Khan, whose loyalty was as genuine as his ability was great. Nevertheless, Akbar was precocious, and within five years of his accession (in 1560) he desired to be *de facto* no less than *de jure* ruler. This was, indeed, a dramatic situation. Bairam Khan's antecedents made it no easy affair to supersede him. Yet.

two swords could not be contained in one scabbard. Meanwhile, other influences were at work on the youthful monarch. Among them Akbar's foster-mother Maham Anaga's was not the least. Besides, Bairam Khan was a Persian and Shia, whose rise to eminence and hold on the young Emperor were more and more disliked by the Chaghatai nobles who were Sunnis. The execution of Tardi Beg Khan, though justified by his grave dereliction at Delhi, was now construed as the malicious murder of a rival who had until then served Humayun and Akbar with equal loyalty. To make matters worse, the autocratic or domineering character of Bairam, though it had served well in the crucial stages of the recovery of the Mughal Empire, was increasingly resented by all who suffered from it. To the imperious Akbar, the yoke of the *Khan-Baba* was irksome if not galling. Abul Fazl and Ferishta accuse him of a conspiracy to supersede his Imperial ward; but what seems more likely is that "his natural good qualities were overclouded, and arrogance was fostered by his flatterers" (Abul Fazl). Elphinstone correctly states: "His temper was harsh and severe, his manners were haughty and overbearing. He was jealous of his authority to the last degree, exacted unbounded obedience and respect, and could not suffer the smallest pretension to power or influence derived from any source but his favour." In this psychological climate, misunderstandings and misgivings multiplied like flies in summer. Matters came to a head when Akbar decided to act formally. He gracefully acknowledged Bairam Khan's past services, but at the same time firmly offered him only three options: (i) to remain a dignified courtier, or (ii) to choose a governorship in any part of the Empire according to his inclinations, or (iii) to go into exile at Mecca. Of these, the proud *Atqa* (*Atgah*) chose the last. Nevertheless, troubles did not end there; his personal enemies saw to it that his exit was not attended with grace. Pir Muhammad (presently to be the conqueror of Malwa), who was Bairam Khan's confidential servant before, but was since alienated from him, was made "to pack him off as quickly as possible to Mecca without giving him any time for delay" (Badauni). Bairam Khan, in sheer desperation, reacted to this with rebellion. He marched off into the Punjab, but was defeated at Jullundur by Akbar's troops. The genuine goodness of Bairam Khan was revealed by the way the struggle ended. When Sultan Husain Jalair, one of his supporters, was killed in action, and his head was brought to him, Bairam burst into emotion and exclaimed: "This life of mine is not worth so much, that a man like this

should be killed in my defence!" Hence he submitted, and Akbar treated him with the gallantry of Alexander towards Porus: "When the *Khan-i-khanan* approached the royal presence, all the *amirs* and *Khans* went out, by the Emperor's order, to meet him, and conducted him to the Emperor with every mark of honour. . . . The Emperor received him with the most princely grace, and presented him with a splendid robe of honour. Two days afterwards, he gave him permission to depart on a pilgrimage to Mecca."

But, unfortunately, on his way thither, Bairam Khan was murdered at Patan, in Kathiawar, by a personal enemy (an Afghan whose father had been killed in the battle of Machhiwara), in January 1561. Akbar married his widow, Salima Sultan Begum, and promoted his son Abdur Rahman to the rank of *Khan-i-khanan* in course of time. But, he too in his turn joined Shah Jahan in his insurrection against Jahangir (1623-6) and was pardoned along with his princely patron. Jahangir writes with bitterness in his *Waqiat*: "Khan-i-khanan, who held the dignity of being my tutor, had now turned rebel, and in the seventieth year of his age had blackened his face with ingratitude. But he was by nature a traitor and a rebel. His father (Bairam Khan) had acted in the same shameful way towards my revered father. He had but followed the course of his father and disgraced himself in his old age."

The first few years of Akbar's independent regime, i.e. after Bairam Khan's dismissal, were a period of trial, when he had to put down some of his rebellious Uzbek generals whom he had appointed Governors in several provinces. Among them were Abdullah Khan (Governor of Malwa), Ali Quli Khan or Khan Zaman (Governor of Jaunpur) and his brother Bahadur Khan, and Asaf Khan (Governor of Karra and conqueror of Gondwana). The first and the last were, more or less, easily brought to submission and did not persist in their contumacious behaviour. But Khan Zaman proved a hard nut to crack. He and his brother Bahadur Khan first attracted the attention of Akbar by their suspicious conduct in 1561. Four years later, they appeared to have grown bolder or hardened in their hostile attitude. Akbar marched against them, in December 1565, and exacted an undertaking from them that they would not cross the Ganges. But Mirza Hakim's incursion into the Punjab in 1566, and Akbar's preoccupation in the West, encouraged Khan Zaman to declare openly for the Emperor's step-brother. He "went so far as to recite the *Khutba*, or prayer for the King, in his own name". At that time in February 1567, Akbar had to deal also with

the revolt of the Mirzas at Sambhal. Finally, in May the same year, he turned towards Khan Zaman who had besieged Shergarh 'four kos from Kanauj'. The rebels thereafter fled to the East, followed by Akbar in hot pursuit. By then the rains had set in and the rivers were in flood. But Akbar crossed a ferry near Manikpur on an elephant, and 1,000 to 1,500 men swam along with him through the flood. In the battle that was fought in the village of Mankarwal, 'one of the dependencies of Josi and Prayag, now known as Ilahabad, on 1st Zi-l hijja, H. 974. Khan Zaman was crushed by an elephant, and his brother was caught and killed. Thus ended the challenge of the Uzbek governors. More than once, Khan-i-khanan Munim Khan had interceded on behalf of the rebels, but they proved unworthy of mercy. At one stage, Akbar was so determined to crush the revolt that "he ordered a pleasant site to be selected (near Jaunpur) and a splendid palace to be built; and the nobles also were to build suitable houses and places suitable to their rank. For it was determined that so long as Ali Quli Khan and his brother should remain in this world, Jaunpur should be the capital of the State." (*Tabaqat-i Akbari* of Nizam-ud-din).

In the reign of Jahangir, we alluded to the *coup de main* of Mahabat Khan (1626). His intention was not so much to capture power for its own sake, as to rescue Jahangir from the clutches of a selfish group which he sincerely believed to be harmful. In his sentiments he was not less loyal than Bairam Khan, and served the Empire honestly in several campaigns in Rajputana and the Deccan where he died a disappointed man in 1634. His is one of the rare instances of Afghans who served the Mughal Emperors with devotion. Otherwise, the members of that race, even when they were promoted to high rank, were not wholly reconciled to the Chaghatai 'usurpers' of their supremacy.

A more typical illustration of their conduct is afforded by Khan Jahan Lodi, who was successively Governor of Gujarat and the Deccan in the reign of Jahangir. He colluded with the Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar and surrendered Balaghat to him, 'for a paltry 3,00,000 of rupees.*' When Jahangir died in 1627, he dreamed of Afghan independence; nevertheless, he was jealous of Mahabat Khan's pre-eminence at the Court of Shah Jahan. He marched upon Mandu with a large force with the intention of seizing Malwa. But when he heard that Shah Jahan had arrived at Ajmer, he sent a letter of contrition. He was, however, superseded by Mahabat Khan as Governor of the Deccan,

* Its annual estimated revenue was 55 crores of *dans*, according to Abdul Hamid Lahori.

and called to attend the Court at Agra. There he lived sullenly for some time, but effected his escape in the night of 5th October 1629. Pursued like Khan Zaman (noticed earlier) and defeated in a battle at Dholpur, he sought refuge in Bundelkhand and Berar successively. Finally, he was tracked down and cut to pieces, along with his son Aziz. Their heads were displayed over the gates of Agra Fort; and the officers who accomplished this victory were richly rewarded: Abdullah Khan was raised to the rank of 6,000 and granted the title of '*Firuz Jung*', and Saiyid Muzaffar Khan received the rank of 5,000 with the title of '*Khan Jahan*' (*Badshah-nama*).

(c) Afghans

As stated above, the Afghans, though rarely united in their efforts, did not give up their struggle against the Mughals easily. Indeed, it appeared to be true that, as Elphinstone has remarked, they were under a curse to be "disunited though always independent"! Individual actions apart, in the eastern provinces, their last organised rebellion took place under the leadership of Usman, son of Isa Khan, the right-hand man of Daud. He was so corpulent (like Kalyan Mall of Bikaner) that he always rode an elephant instead of a horse. Nevertheless, he was quite virile, and offered the most determined resistance. Taking advantage of Raja Man Singh's absence from Bengal, where he was Governor, Usman first attempted a rising in 1592 during Akbar's reign. That having proved abortive he returned to the fray in 1599 when Akbar was busy with the Deccan campaign. Man Singh's son and deputy in Bengal, Jagat Singh, having died, he was succeeded by his son Maha Singh. But Man Singh hurried to the east and suppressed the rising once more. Still, no sooner was his back turned on Bengal in 1604, than the irrepressible Afghan started harassing the Imperial officers in that province. Hence, when Jahangir came to the throne, a regular and sustained campaign was led against Usman and other refractory elements, such as the Barah Bhuiyas and Maghs, of that region. During the regime of Islam Khan who eventually succeeded Man Singh as Governor of Bengal, Usman was at last defeated, on 12th March 1612, at Nek Ujyal (100 kos from Dacca). Though wounded by a gunshot in his head, the tough Pathan continued to direct his forces for six hours. The battle raged the livelong day, but ended in a complete triumph for the Imperial commander Sujaat Khan, who thereby earned the title of '*Rustam Zaman*' and the rank of 1,000 *zat* and *sawar*.

Usman's head was presented to Jahangir early in April 1612, and the rebel's brother, Wali, finally submitted.

Jahangir adopted conciliatory measures towards the vanquished, and, in the words of the *Makhzan-i Afghani*: "Pardoning their former trespasses, (Jahangir) attached them to himself by the bonds of bounty;... (the Afghans) raised themselves to the rank of Grand Umara and were deemed worthy to be admitted to the Imperial company."

Mughal conquests on the north-west frontier have already been dealt with. However, it will be helpful to review the entire situation there at the close of Akbar's reign. Ever since Humayun left Kabul in the charge of Mirza Muhammad Hakim in 1554, the frontier had been a source of recurring dangers. The Mirza himself invaded the Punjab in 1566; but, when Akbar marched to Lahore, he grew fearful and withdrew. His most formidable attempt was made in 1580-1, which was the year of the greatest crisis for Akbar, owing to simultaneous risings in several parts of the Empire. The rebels in the eastern provinces proclaimed Mirza Hakim Emperor in place of Akbar, while Shah Mansur, Akbar's Finance Minister, was suspected of carrying on treasonable correspondence with the rebels. He was suspended from office, imprisoned, and ultimately executed as a traitor (27th February 1581).^{*} Akbar pursued his brother with a large army, entered the city of Kabul on 9th August 1581, and, the Mirza having fled, entrusted the government of that place to his sister. Raja Man Singh was put in charge of the Indus province, and transferred to Kabul when Hakim died in July 1585. Kashmir surrendered in 1586, Sind in 1591, and Baluchistan in 1595. Badakhshan was filched from Mirza Suleiman by Abdullah Khan Uzbek, and had to be given up for ever. But these events did not "settle" the frontier.

In 1585-6 there was great trouble from the Yusufzai (V. A. Smith considers Yusufzi more correct) Pathans. A Hindusthani 'prophet', named Bayazid, had appeared among them and founded a new sect called the *Roshanai*. Apart from the tenets of his heretical faith, he infused among the frontier tribes a spirit of revolt. In order to crush them and restore order in that region, Akbar dispatched troops under Zain Khan Kokaltash, Hakim Abu-l-Fath and Raja Birbal. Man Singh was in Kabul and Akbar at Attock. The Yusufzai and Mandar tribal area lay in between them. Zain Khan entered the Bajaur territory to the westward, and the other two were sent into

^{*} For the controversy surrounding this event Cf. Smith's *Akbar*, pp.193-7; and Sarkar and Datta, *Modern Indian History*, Vol I, pp.102-3.

the Suat (Swat) region, east of the Panjkora river. Though the campaign succeeded in its objective, it was only after paying a very heavy price: nearly 8,000 troops perished along with Raja Birbal who was ambushed. Raja Man Singh and Todar Mall were sent to avenge themselves and complete the work. The Yusufzai, consequently, renounced the *Roshanai* creed for the time being. Nevertheless, when Bayazid died in 1585, his work was taken up by his son Jalaha, who kept up the agitation and even succeeded in capturing Ghazni in 1600. The Imperialists, therefore, enjoyed no permanent peace on the frontier.

During the campaigns in Sind and Baluchistan (1590-5) also, there were numerous engagements with the hostile tribes. In one of these, in Sihwan, Dharu (son of Raja Todar Mall) was killed in 1590; and in 1595, "Mir Masum the historian, who wielded the sword and the pen with equal facility, attacked the fort of Siwi to the S.E. of Quetta which was held by the Parni Afghans. The tribesmen, who mustered strong for its defence, were defeated and, after consideration, surrendered; with the result that all Baluchistan as far as the frontiers of Kandahar including Makran, down to the coast, passed under the Imperial sceptre."

How imperfect the pacification or assimilation of the wild Pathans of the frontier was, may be gathered from the campaigns Aurangzeb was obliged to direct against them between 1667-77. They were called for by the risings of all the tribes, from Kandahar to Attock, the Afridis, the Khataks and the Yusufzais. Early in 1667, an insurrection was organised by a man named Bhagu, with the blessings of a local saint called Mullah Chalak. With a force of 5,000 Yusufzais, Bhagu crossed the Indus at Attock and overwhelmed the Hazara district, through which ran the road to Kashmir. They harried the land north of Peshawar with fire and sword, overpowering the Imperial outposts, and could not be suppressed until August 1667. Then they found in Md. Amin Khan a Mughal grandee who was more than a match for them.

In 1672, the Afridis rose under a chieftain called Acmal Khan. They won their first spectacular victory over Amin Khan, Governor of Kabul, who had grown negligent since his triumph over the Yusufzais; he was overwhelmed while returning from Peshawar. "Ten thousand men fell under the enemy's sword in the field, and above two *crores* of rupees in cash and kind were looted from them." About 20,000 men and women were also taken captive to be sold into slavery. Lured by this easy success, other tribesmen flocked to the 'standards' of Acmal Khan, among whom

were the warlike Khataks of Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu. The latter were led by their poet-soldier Khush-hal Khan who had had a very adventurous career. One after another, the best generals in the Mughal service were withdrawn from the Deccan, Mahabat Khan, Sujaat Khan and Jaswant Singh, in order to stem the tide of these Pathans. Hindu and Muslim blood was spilt in the valley of the Indus for the defence of the Punjab, without stint. At last, Aurangzeb himself arrived at Hasan Abdal, between Rawalpindi and Peshawar, on 26th June 1674. Aghar Khan, an able Turkish officer who had served with distinction in the Deccan, was also recalled and sent into the Khyber Pass. He soon became such a terror to the Pathans that "Afghan mothers used to silence their babies with his dreaded name". With Aurangzeb's arrival on the scene, as Sarkar has observed, Imperial diplomacy, no less than Imperial arms, began to have effect. Though a few more reverses were suffered by the Imperialists, before the close of 1675 the situation improved, and Aurangzeb was enabled to return to Delhi. From 1678-98, by the tactful and efficient administration of Amir Khan, who was appointed Governor of Kabul, order was brought out of chaos in Afghanistan and the tribal areas. He followed the policy of "peaceful penetration" and was ably assisted in this by his wife Sahibji. One clan was played off against another, thereby reducing the wastage of Imperial troops: "breaking two bones", as Aurangzeb said, "by knocking them together". In a dispatch to the Emperor, dated 25th October 1681, Amir Khan states: "Six lakhs of rupees were allotted by Government to be paid to the Afghans for guarding the roads; I have spent $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, and saved the rest to the State."

(d) Rajputs

After the first Mughal triumph over the Afghans at Panipat, in 1526, they had to deal with the Rajputs at Khanua and Chanderi (1527-8). There was no opposition from that quarter during the next reign, as the Rajputs were engaged in a struggle with Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Humayun missed a golden opportunity to befriend the gallant Rajputs when he failed to respond to the entreaties of Rani Karnawati for succour against Bahadur Shah (1535). Sher Shah just scraped through Rajputana, the real conquest of which was undertaken by Akbar. We have witnessed his historic siege of Chitor, the heroic martyrdom of Jai Mall and Patta (1567-8), and finally the epic struggle of Rana Pratap (1576-97), ending in the submission of Amar Singh in the time of Jahangir (1614). One

of the conditions, laid down then was that Chitor should never again be rehabilitated. But Rana Jagat Singh began to rebuild the fortress, in contravention of that stipulation. When he died in 1652, his son, Raj Singh, continued the work of reconstruction. Incensed at this symptom of the rebellious spirit, Shah Jahan marched against him in September 1654, with an army of 30,000 under Sadullah Khan. Other precautions were also duly taken against all contingencies by ordering reinforcements under Prince Aurangzeb and Sultan Muhammad. However, Raj Singh submitted without much ado, and Shah Jahan returned to Agra by the end of that year.

Though Jaswant Singh Rathod fought against Aurangzeb in the battle of Dharmat (April 1658), he came over to him soon after; yet his loyalty was never above suspicion. At Khajwa, on the eve of the engagement with Shuja (4th January 1659), he deserted the Imperialists, and the situation was saved only by the resourcefulness of Aurangzeb. During Shivaji's coup against Shayista Khan at Poona (5th April 1663), he appeared in a dubious role, and allowed the Maratha hero to escape with impunity. He was posted at Jamrud on the frontier during the Afghan campaigns, where he died on 10th December 1678, not without suspicion of foul play on the part of Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb promptly hastened to Ajmer on 9th January 1679, with a view to annexing Jodhpur (Marwar); but on 29th February, he learnt that two of Jaswant's widows had given birth to two posthumous children. One of them died immediately, but the other lived to be the famous Ajit Singh who carried on a protracted struggle for the independence of his State. On 2nd April 1679, Aurangzeb reimposed the invidious *jiziya*, more than a century after its abolition by Akbar (in 1564). On 26th May, Indra Singh Rathod, a grand-nephew of Jeswant Singh, was forced upon Marwar as the Raja of Jodhpur, with the assistance of Mughal troops. The Emperor received a succession fee of 36 lakhs of rupees. These provocations inevitably relit the fires of revolt in Rajasthan under the redoubtable leadership of Durga Das, son of Jaswant Singh's minister Askaran—baron of Drunera. Then, indeed, the struggle once more entered an epic stage.

Aurangzeb made Ajmer his headquarters on 25th September 1679, and spread havoc over the doomed province. Raj Singh of Mairtha made a brave sortie near Lake Pushkar, but only to be wiped out. Marwar was 'vivisected' under several Mughal *faujdar*s; temples were destroyed and replaced by mosques. But the mother of Ajit Singh was a Mewar princess; she brought in the sup-

port of the Sisodias at this critical juncture. Nevertheless, Aurangzeb anticipated every resource of strategy : Udaipur was devastated and 173 temples in its environs were razed to the ground (January-February 1680). Still, the Rana held the crest of the Aravali range which separated Marwar from Mewar. The Imperial forces were thus divided, too. The Rajputs, in these straits, adopted guerilla tactics. The retirement of Aurangzeb from Ajmer in March 1680 put heart into the defenders of Rajasthan. Very soon they became such a terror to the invaders that few officers were prepared to hold isolated *thanas*. At the end of May 1680, the Rana delivered a crushing blow on Prince Akbar, carrying away 10,000 pack-oxen laden with grain from Malwa. This defeat occasioned a change of command; Prince Azam took the place of his brother at Chitor, and the latter was transferred to Marwar (18th July 1680). On 1st January 1681, Akbar joined the Rajputs, and declared himself Emperor in place of Aurangzeb. The sequel has been already described by us. He drew his father out of North India, never to return.

The Rajputs, under Bhim Singh and Dayal Das, fully exploited this Imperial crisis, and turned the tables against their enemies. They also went farther and ravaged the neighbouring provinces of Malwa and Gujarat. At last, both sides desired peace, particularly as Aurangzeb was now getting engrossed in the South. Maharana Jai Singh ceded the *parganas* of Mandal, Pur and Bednor, on Prince Md. Azam's agreeing to forego the *jiziya*. The Mughals thereafter withdrew their forces from Mewar, and Jai Singh accepted the Imperial rank of 5,000.

The situation in Marwar remained unchanged. "Throughout the succeeding generation we find the Mughal hold on Marwar pulsating with the military situation in the Deccan" (Sarkar). For thirty long years the struggle continued, until Bahadur Shah recognised Ajit Singh lord of Marwar in 1709. From 1681 to 1687, Ajit Singh being in concealment, it was a people's war, leaderless, desperate and desultory; from 1687 to 1701, Durga Das and Ajit Singh returned and tried to organise the war of independence, with the valuable assistance of the Hadas of Bundi; but during the period 1701-7, the struggle entered its last and decisive phase. Ajit had 'stooped to conquer' more than once, receiving Imperial rank in order to tide over crises. But, when the glad tidings of the death of Aurangzeb reached his ears on 7th March 1707, Ajit Singh once again threw off the mask, drove away Jaffar Quli, the deputy *faujdar* of Jodhpur, and ascended the throne of his ancestors. The struggle was exhausting, but the prize was

worth the 'blood, sweat, tears and toil.' For the Imperialists the war on three fronts, against the Afghans, the Rajputs and the Marathas, proved disastrous.

The task of consolidation of the Imperial conquests meant more than what might appear from the major wars so far considered. There were lacunae to be filled in everywhere. For instance, in the reign of Akbar, there was a Rathod chieftain belonging to the Bagul branch of Baglan (Nasik District : between Surat and Nandurbar), whom the Mughals could not easily subdue. Owing to natural advantages, their strongholds of Salher and Mulher resisted the Imperialists for seven long years. Finally, when Akbar conquered Khandesh (1599), Pratap Shah, the Bagul chief, submitted to him on honourable terms, accepting the rank of 3,000 and being allowed to retain Nizampur, Daita and Badur. Both the *Ain-e-Akbari* and the *Memoirs of Jahangir* allude to this prince.*

To cite another illustration : Bundelkhand, in the heart of Hindusthan, took very long for the Mughals to assimilate. It comprised the territory roughly enclosed between the Ganges in the north, the Chambal in the west, the Son in the east, and a line drawn from Chanderi to Jubbulpur in the south. Before the time of Babur, the hold of the Lodis upon that province was anything but secure. The Mughals ran past its borders rather than occupied it. During the revolt of Prince Selim, its ruler, Bir Singh Bundela, assassinated Abul Fazl (12th August 1602) and rose to high rank at the accession of Jahangir. Under Shah Jahan, Jujhar Singh (son of Bir Singh) created great trouble (1627-35). Enriched with the illgotten wealth of his father and entrenched in his stronghold of Orcha, he despoiled and captured Chauragarh, in Gondwana, and defied the Emperor. The result was a protracted campaign, interrupted only by the temporary submission of Jujhar owing to necessity, ultimately ending in the capture and slaughter of most of the rebel's party. Jujhar and his eldest son, Jagraj, fled into the forests of Gondwana, only to fall into the hands of their Gond enemies. Their dead bodies were discovered by Khan Dauran, and their severed heads were dispatched as trophies to the Imperial Court. Two of the younger sons, Udaybhan and Siyam Dawa, "were offered the alternatives of Islam or death: they chose the latter and went to hell!" (Lahori). Some of the infant captives were converted to Islam, the women preferred immolation to captivity, and treasures worth about ten million rupees were brought into the Imperial treasury. Devi Singh, an unscrupulous 'Quisling' was installed as the Raja

* Read S. R. Sharma, *Maratha History Re-examined*, pp.51-2.

of Bundelkhand (1635). But even this did not result in the complete subjugation of all the Bundelas. The people were too incensed to be submissive. They found leaders in Champat Rai and Rajrup, who organised another revolt (1639). Jagat Singh, father of Rajrup, had served the Mughals loyally in their frontier campaigns, but his son's activities in his home province drew him into the insurrection. They held out in three places: Mau, Nurpur and Taragarh (1641-2). The struggle was hard as well as dogged on both sides. Nevertheless, the result was a foregone conclusion. On 11th March 1642, Jagat Singh submitted and resumed his Imperial service. Champat Rai, too, was obliged to surrender temporarily in May 1642. He was with Aurangzeb in the battle of Samugarh (May 1658), but deserted him along with Jaswant Singh at Khajwa (January 1659). He renewed his insurrectionary activities, until, exhausted with fever and betrayed by dubious friends, he killed himself with a dagger in October 1661. His son was the more famous Chhatrasal, who lived for eighty-one years (1650-1731), and after 1670, with the opening of Aurangzeb's fanatical activities, became a thorn in the side of the Imperialists. His fuller story will be narrated later.

(e) Europeans

We have seen how the Europeans (Portuguese) entered India, by the newly discovered sea-route, nearly three decades before Babur's victory at Panipat (1498-1526). That was to prove, in its ultimate consequences, a more revolutionary contact than even the Mughal conquest of India. The further progress of the European adventurers in India is described in another part of this book; here we shall consider only their conflicts with the Indian powers. Though the Portuguese had a strong antipathy towards the Muhammadans on religious grounds—a legacy of the Crusades—the troubles in India arose more from secular causes. It was essentially for the profits of trade that blood was shed by all the parties involved: there was neither Christian, nor Muslim, nor Gentile here. So far as the Europeans were concerned, national distinctions between the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the English, showed themselves presently in their scramble for commercial advantages. These rivalries and conflicts were confined during the 16th and 17th centuries mainly to the ports. Here India was most exposed to a multiplicity of dangers. In the first place, the Mughals, who were Central Asian adventurers, were never at home on the seas; their control stopped with the shore. Even there, as we have

noticed, their territorial expansion hardly touched the most vulnerable parts of the Indian littoral. It was just here that the European adventurers found the greatest opportunities. They had their best nursery on the Malabar coast, where neither Vijayanagar, nor the Mughals, nor the Marathas had effective authority. The lack of unity among the local rulers—petty *rajas*—enabled the Portuguese to play off one against another. Being maritime and naval powers, they and the Dutch found a secure base in Ceylon, out of reach of all the Indian rulers. On the Coromandal coast, too, they found a convenient backdoor from which to tap the rich resources of India. The Mughals came into possession of the northern part of that seaboard only after Aurangzeb's conquest of Golkonda in 1687. Farther north, in Orissa and Bengal, the Imperialists had more than enough troubles from indigenous refractory elements to show the foresight, or find the time, to tackle the Europeans, except when they proved directly provocative. In the west, at first Vijayanagar, then Bijapur, and later the Marathas (from the time of Shivaji) were interested in the ports south of Gujarat down to Goa. Before the conquest of Gujarat by the Mughals, the Sultans, particularly Bahadur Shah, attempted to protect themselves from the encroachments of the Portuguese; thereafter that region suffered from an interlude of anarchy when the Europeans tried to forward their own interests. It is in the light of this background that we have to understand the character and significance of what followed.

The hands of the Portuguese were never clean even in their best days. Now their desperate struggles with other European rivals and the Indian powers imparted to them a character of which no people could feel proud. In the early days of 'privateering' most of the Christian adventurers preferred material gains to moral considerations; and, in all conscience, 'national advantage' could cover all crimes. In that *milieu* conflicts arose between the Mughal authorities (we shall consider the Marathas later) and the Europeans, partly on account of the Imperial 'customs', partly on account of the conduct of the foreigners in their relations with local authorities, but mainly owing to the pernicious activities of the European pirates (of all nationalities), as well as the duplicity of their principals in India in their dealings with the Mughal Government. Apart from the general interests of revenue and trade (in which the Emperors and their grandees had personal investments), the pilgrim traffic to Mecca was frequently exposed to danger from European buccaneers. When all is said, the conduct of the Europeans, the Portuguese in parti-

cular, was at times too egregious to be tolerated or overlooked. As the *Cambridge History of India* has observed: "A rich pilgrim vessel on its way to India (February 1502) from the Red Sea was intercepted by da Gama's fleet, plundered and sunk; there were many women and children on board; but to these no mercy was shown; and we actually read that da Gama watched the horrors of the scene through a porthole, merciless and unmoved" (Vol. VI, p. 6).

When Akbar invaded Gujarat in 1573 at Surat, some of the Portuguese, who had come to support the Gujaratis, gauged the superior might of the Mughal Emperor, and at once turned to him with gifts (*Akbar-nama*). A treaty was also signed by Cabral (Portuguese envoy from Goa) assuring protection to the pilgrims to Mecca. In the siege of Asirgarh, too, in 1600, they were on the side of the defenders, while outwardly professing friendship towards Akbar. According to Du Jarric, "the Khandesh forces against whom Akbar was fighting were in alliance with the Portuguese."

In the time of Jahangir, in 1613, the Portuguese seized three or four Imperial vessels, carrying goods worth about a million rupees each; and Muqarrab Khan, Governor of Surat, with the assistance of the English sea-captain Downton, inflicted on them a heavy defeat. Consequently, all the privileges hitherto granted to the Portuguese by the Mughal Emperors were withdrawn. Portuguese nationals, including Father Xavier, were arrested, and their churches at Agra and Lahore were forcibly closed. But peace was temporarily restored in 1615. After three years' stay in India, Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of King James I of England, profiting from this experience, warned his countrymen in memorable words: "It is the beggaring of the Portugale, notwithstanding his many rich residences and territories, that he keepes souldiers that spends it... It has been also the error of the Dutch who seek Plantation here by the sword." "Lett this bee received, as a rule," he added, "that if you will Profit, seek it at Sea, and in quiett trade; for it is an error to affect garrisons and Land warrs in India." Nonetheless, the English followed a more ambitious policy, as we shall see, though they avoided some of the serious errors committed by the Portuguese.

Portuguese settlements studded the entire coast of India, from Diu and Daman in the west to Hugli in the east. In the reign of Shah Jahan, matters came to a crisis at the last mentioned place. Portuguese pirates, along with others from Chittagong, created havoc in East Bengal. Bernier states; "Often they penetrated 40 or 50 leagues

upcountry from the river mouths, and carried away the entire population of villages... and even offered for sale the aged people in their very places of residence; and it was a pathetic sight to see young men redeeming their parents." They also perpetrated unspeakable horrors,* and converted people to Christianity: "Boasting", says Bernier, "they made more Christians in a twelvemonth than all the missionaries in the Indies in ten years." Shah Jahan, therefore, directed a great punitive campaign against them in 1632: "4,400 Christians were taken captive; and nearly 10,000 inhabitants of the neighbouring country who had been kept in confinement by these tyrants were set at liberty?"

Lastly, under Aurangzeb, the English, too, came in for some trouble. They had already established themselves at Surat in 1612. By 1633, they had built factories in Bengal as well, and purchased the site of Fort St. George (Madras), "their first independent station in India", in 1640. The Hugli settlement was opened in 1651, where they obtained from Shuja in 1652 a *nishan* (permit) compounding the customs duties for an annual payment of Rs 3,000. On the strength of this and other concessions granted by Aurangzeb at Surat, the English in Bengal evaded payment of all other State dues. Sir Jadunath Sarkar rightly characterises these evasions as "false and indefensible on any reasoning." An illustration of their conduct is provided by the case of Job Charnock. Some Indian merchants of Kasimbazar had preferred against him a claim for Rs 43,000 and the Imperial Court had awarded that amount. But Charnock refused to make the payment. Consequently, troops invested Charnock's factory in August 1685. The English retaliated by sacking Hugli on 28th October 1686. Shayista Khan, the Mughal viceroy of Bengal, thereupon decided to act vigorously. In December, the rebels fell back upon Sutanati (Calcutta) and seized the island of Hijli in February 1687. Here they concentrated all their land and naval forces, and looted and burnt Balasore for two full days. Finally, they were forced to evacuate Hijli on 11th June. In 1688, Charnock's successor, Capt. Heath, disgraced himself and besmirched the name of his country by the atrocities he committed on Christians and non-Christians, men and women alike. Being foiled in his attempt to capture Chittagong from the Mughals, he retired to Madras on 17th February 1689.

* e.g. They pierced the hands of their victims and passed thin canes through the holes, and threw them in heaps under the decks of their ships. For food they threw uncooked rice at them as at pigeons!

This insurrection in Bengal was really part of a concerted plan. Sir Josiah Child, Chairman of the East India Company, London, had declared for a policy of founding "a large, well-grounded sure English dominion in India, for all time to come"! His namesake, Sir John Child, General and Director-in-Chief of English Factories in India, acting under instructions from home, led a similar adventure on the west coast. On 25th April 1687, he abandoned Surat and moved to Bombay, arrogantly demanding from the Imperial authorities "compensation for past injuries and a fresh charter confirming and extending their privileges".

Aurangzeb met these impertinences with strong military action. He also ordered the seizure of all Englishmen, their goods and factories, and prohibited all intercourse with them. Surat was invested, and, along with others, Benjamin Harris, Chief of the Surat Council, was kept in irons for sixteen months (December 1688 to April 1690). Governor Child, therefore, realised that it was no child's play to defy the Empire, and had to surrender, paying an indemnity of Rs 1,50,000, besides restoring all the goods plundered from Indian ships.

Indeed, during this dark period of British activities in India, the Company's factors were in league with shameless buccaneers like Kidd, Roberts, Teach, Evory and Tew. They not merely connived at the piracies of their notorious countrymen, but also had a share in their ill-gotten profits. Khafi Khan avers: "The profits of the commerce of these misbelievers, according to report, do not exceed 20 *lakhs* of rupees; the balance of the money required for the maintenance of the English settlement is obtained by plundering the ships voyaging to the House of God, of which they take one or two every year." To cite a few illustrations: in 1635, Cobb, Captain of an English vessel licensed by King Charles I, plundered two Mughal ships, at the entrance of the Red Sea. In 1638, Sir William Courten, with a similar charter from the King of England, sent out four ships, which robbed Indian vessels, torturing their crews. Roberts alone was credited with the looting of 400 vessels in the course of three years. In 1681, two pirate ships flying English colours, gathered booty worth six *lakhs* of rupees in the Red Sea. Finally, Captain William Kidd, who had been originally commissioned by a Syndicate of English noblemen (on the *Adventure*, a very strong 30-guns fighting vessel) "to destroy piracy in the Indian Ocean", actually led a pirate fleet with 120 guns and 300 European buccaneers, the majority of whom were Englishmen.

Amanat Khan, Mughal Governor of Surat, besieged all

the European factories at Surat in December 1698, and exacted from them a joint-undertaking for concerted action in the suppression of piracy and the restitution of plundered property: The Dutch were to pay an indemnity of Rs. 70,000 and convoy the pilgrims, and guard the entrance to the Red Sea; the English to pay Rs. 30,000 and patrol the southern seas; and the French to make a similar payment, and police the Persian Gulf. In spite of all this, however, in January 1702, out of 109 captives brought to Surat, there were 21 English officials of the E.I. Company!

3. Achievement of Harmony

(f) Din-e-Ilahi

Military conquests alone, as we noted above, could not bring about a stable dominion. The vigorous survival of the Mughal Empire during 150 years (1557-1707) was due to certain other features which call for a careful examination. Of course, military might is the ultimate sanction behind all government; when that deteriorates, the political system created with its aid also crumbles. Likewise, an efficient administration is a great desideratum for moral and material progress. Both these requisites were present in the Mughal Empire to a large extent. But the most striking qualities which contributed to the success of that dominion were: (i) the Indianisation of the Mughal dynasty, and (ii) the capacity of the earlier Emperors to achieve political, if not also social, harmony. When the Government became positively partisan, as between the various sections of the people over which it ruled, its death-knell as a successful system, was rung.

Akbar was the first Mughal Emperor who was born in India. Jahangir's mother as well as motherland were Indian. Indeed, Akbar's marriage with the Amber princess was symbolic of his wanting to be, not merely an Indian Muslim ruler but also a national king. That union, like that of the Yorkists and Lancastrians in England, after the Wars of the Roses, was intended to remove long-standing animosities. Earlier Sultans had carried away Hindu brides and forced them into their harems; but the outcome was increased bitterness. Now the Rajputs were drawn closer, not only by ties of kinship, as in the case of Raja Man Singh, but also, or more, on account of the conciliatory policy adopted by the new family of rulers. They seemed to seek harmony instead of humiliation. We shall give a few concrete illustrations.

Akbar was a determined conqueror, ruthless where all other methods failed. As Paruschi pointed out: "The prince rarely loses his temper; but if he should fall into a passion, it is impossible to say how great his wrath may be; the good thing about it is... that his wrath is short-lived, quickly passing from him; for, in truth, he is naturally humane, gentle and kind." That temper was seen in its great violence, not only at Chitor against the Sisodias, but as much at home, against his own foster-brother Adham Khan (who murdered his minister Shams-ud-din Md. Atga Khan on 16th May 1562) and his maternal uncle Khwaja Muazzam (who killed his own wife in March 1564). The gallantry of the conqueror was shown by his admiration of the heroism of his enemies, Jai Mall and Patta, to honour whom he erected their statues in Agra. Jahangir did likewise with Rana Amar Singh and his son Karan Singh.

Akbar's policy towards the Rajputs was not whimsical but calculated. He exalted those who readily submitted, as in the case of Bhagwan Das and Man Singh; he met determined resistance with ruthlessness, as with Rana Pratap; and compromised with self-respecting opponents who were inclined to accept honourable terms, after losing the wager of battle, as he did with the Hadas of Bundi. The last submitted on condition that Bundi should continue to be for the Hadas what Delhi was to the conqueror; that they should not be called upon to send a *dola* (bride) to the Imperial *harem*; that they should not be compelled to serve beyond Attock; that they should be exempt from the *jiziya* and the *sijda* (prostration before the Emperor); and that their horses should not be branded by the Imperial *dagh*. Raja Man Singh rose to the highest rank open to any subject of the Mughal Emperor and served with distinction from Kabul to Cuttack. The tradition was continued by the Imperial rulers, in the case of the Kachh-wahas, even when the general policy was reversed under Aurangzeb. Raja Jai Singh was one of the greatest and most distinguished generals who served Alamgir loyally unto the last.

The Afghans, as Imperial rivals, were a spent force after the death of Sher Shah. Daud and Usman of Bengal were mere provincial rebels. The Mughal attitude towards their fallen foes was reflected in Jahangir's treatment of Usman. He tried conciliation before drastic military action: "Eloquent men were sent to admonish Usman and point out to him the way of loyalty, and bring him back from the road of rebellion to the right path. The ambassadors, in an eloquent speech, attempted to convince the Afghans of the

folly of drawing on themselves the Imperial arms, and the little chance there was of again shaking off the Mughal yoke which, they asserted, pressed lighter on them than on any other class of His Majesty's subjects: that, united in the faith of Muhammad, it was their duty, as the inferior power, to bend to and endeavour to assimilate with the conquerors: that nations rise and fall by destiny... They ought, therefore, to bear their lot with humility and resignation." That, eventually, the Afghans did all this, has been noticed by us already. In the words of their own historian Niamullah: "Nuruddin Ghazi (Jahangir) pardoning them their former trespasses, attached them to himself... and they, in their turn, aspiring after the Imperial favour and after exalted ranks, were dignified with illustrious titles." Khan-i-khanan Mahabat Khan was an eminent illustration in point.

The secret of Mughal success lay in their desire for assimilation. Akbar was the very embodiment of that ideal. If the main divisions within the country could be bridged over, the work of consolidation would reach its culmination. It was not a mere question of religious toleration. The cultural *rapprochement* had begun long before Akbar appeared on the scene. In society, Kabir and Nanak, and, among rulers, Zain-ul-Abidin had preceded the Imperial Mughal idealist. The liberal tendencies of the age were working themselves out in various directions. The social reforms of Akbar were an important aspect of those trends. But we shall concentrate here upon the political effort to weld the people into a homogeneous body, if possible. Here religion did play an important part. It had hitherto not only separated the Hindus from the Muslims socially, but also kept the rulers apart from a large section of their subjects. Even when the Sultans were Indian born, or Hindus converted to Islam, they alienated the vast mass of the people professing a different faith from themselves, because of religion. It was possible to tolerate the Hindus passively, i.e. allow them freely to follow the tenets and customs of their creed uninterfered with, and yet refuse to recognise their political equality with the ruling class. (The British did this in later times.) Few Muslim rulers of India had risen even, to this degree of tolerance.

Akbar was a mystic by temperament, "gathering the bliss of early hours" (Badauni); he was an eclectic, and "went so far in relation to each religion that different people had reasonable grounds for affirming him to be a Zoroastrian, a Hindu, a Jain, or a Christian" (Smith): he was a reformist who held that "the noblest employments

are the reformation of the manners of the people" (Abul Fazl); in short, as Jahangir succinctly put it: "In his actions and movements (Akbar) was not like the people of the world, the glory of God manifested itself in him." Yet, withal, he was pre-eminently a statesman of the highest order. He could conceive of the needs of politics, apart from those of religion; in other words, he could make of religion a handmaid to politics. While trying to put men of all religions at ease by his positive acts of toleration, he wanted also to draw them closer into co-operation with himself in the building up of a New State. His conceptions were, therefore, deeper than those of an academic student of comparative religion. The *Din-e-Ilahi* was nothing more than a tentative experiment in the process of fundamental synthesis; it was never forced upon any one. Man Singh, Bhagwan Das and Todar Mall never accepted it; still they retained their rank and continued to serve Akbar loyally. Badauni, its most uncompromising critic, did not share the persecution of the orthodox Muslims with which he charges Akbar. Like the Krori system in the fiscal administration, this 'Esperanto of Religion' was simply allowed to lapse, when the essentially practical Akbar realised its futility.

No better exposition of Akbar's objectives is to be found than Bartoli's: "For an Empire ruled by one head, it was a bad thing to have the members divided among themselves, and at variance one with the other. . . . We ought therefore to bring them all into one, but in such a fashion that they should be One and All, with the great advantage of not losing what is good in any one religion, while gaining whatever is better in another. In that way, honour would be rendered to God, peace would be given to the peoples, and *security to the Empire*." That the dominating motive behind Akbar's religious innovation was *political* is also borne out by the very text of the so-called 'Infallibility Decree' (1582) which speaks for itself: It begins with—

Whereas Hindusthan has now become the centre of security and peace, and the land of justice and beneficence, a large number of people, especially learned men and lawyers, have immigrated and chosen this country for their home: Now we, the principal Ulamas, who are not only well-versed in several departments of the law and in the principles of jurisprudence, and well-acquainted with the edicts which rest on reason and testimony, but are also known for our piety and honest intentions, have duly considered the deep meaning of the verse of the *Quran*: 'Obey God and obey the Prophet and those who have authority over you'.

Then it goes on to state that Akbar should be recognised as *Sultan-i-Adil* ('Just Ruler') and his verdict should be accepted "as a political expedient" whenever disputes arose "regarding which the opinions of the *Mujtahids* are at variance, . . . provided always that such an order be not only in accordance with some verse of the *Quran*, but also of real benefit to the nation." It is obvious that this is not anti-Islamic as alleged by Smith and Badauni. In fact, the document closes with the definite declaration: "This has been written with honest intentions, for the glory of God and the propagation of Islam." Yet, there was enough in the entire outlook, policy and conduct of Akbar for Orthodoxy to feel flabbergasted. The fulminations of Badauni have no other significance than this.

It is difficult to locate the exact moment when there was a turn in the tide. The achievement of harmony under Akbar was not complete. For its culmination, a continuity of his liberal policy for generations was necessary, if it was to bear lasting fruit. Under Jahangir, though, in general, nothing was done to interrupt the healthy trends of the previous reign, the execution of Guru Arjun (1606)—apart from all other considerations—was a great political blunder. The Sikhs were a virile and martial group organized on principles conducive to harmony instead of discord. Like the Rajputs, they could be an invaluable source of strength, if they were not antagonised, as the British discovered later. But Guru Har Govind (1606-45), son and successor of Guru Arjun, was imprisoned at Gwalior for twelve years, for not paying the fine imposed upon his father. The reaction was seen in his revolt against Shah Jahan, in the second year of whose reign (1628), an Imperial army was defeated by the Sikh Guru at Sangrama (near Amritsar). Further, the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur by Aurangzeb's order in 1675 made definitely for the emergence of the Khalsa under Guru Govind Singh (1675-1708).

Another milestone was marked in the time of Shah Jahan, not towards liberalism, but in the reverse direction. The restoration of the orthodox calendar (*Hijrah*, instead of *Ilahi*) and *char taslim* in place of the *sjda* or the *zaminbos**, were 'straws in the wind.' The return of Orthodoxy was definitely portended by the destruction of temples (e.g. in Benares in 1633), and forcible conversions to Islam (e.g. of the Portuguese at Hugli in 1632, and of the Bunde-

* Forms of salutation.

las in 1635). The *Badshah-nama* states: It had been brought to the notice of His Majesty that during the late reign (of Jahangir) many idol temples had been begun but remained unfinished at Benares, the stronghold of infidelity. The infidels were now desirous of completing them. His Majesty (Shah Jahan), the Defender of the Faith, gave orders that at Benares and throughout all his dominions in every place, all temples that had been begun should be cast down. It was now reported from the province of Allahabad that seventy-six temples had been destroyed in the district of Benares. (E. & D. VII, p.36.)

Hindus were also forbidden to dress like the Muslims, to drink or sell wine openly or privately, to cremate their dead or burn *satis* near Muslim grave-yards, and to purchase Muslims as slaves, and so on. Raja Bakhtawar Singh, son of Raj Singh Kachhwaha, was honoured with marks of approbation on his conversion to Islam, and his son was entitled *Sa'adatmand* for the same reason. (Saksena, 294-5). Yet, there were also a few redeeming acts of liberalism: Petro Della Valle and Fr. Manrique refer to the prohibition of the slaughter of cows and other animals in the Hindu districts. So, the two trends co-existed up to this stage; but the retreat of Liberalism and the advance of Orthodoxy were equally clear. The triumph of the latter became more and more pronounced in the course of the next reign.

4. Orthodoxy in the Saddle

(g) Dar-ul-Islam

The 150 years which elapsed between the accession of Akbar (1556) and the death of Aurangzeb (1707) may be divided into three nearly equal periods. Of these, the first fifty years (1556-1605) constituted the era of Akbar, the second (1605-57) were shared rather unequally between Jahangir (1605-27) and Shah Jahan (1627-57), and the third (1657-1707) constituted the epoch of Aurangzeb. Each of them had certain striking characteristics: Akbar stood for Unity and Liberalism; Jahangir and Shah Jahan represented the swing towards Orthodoxy; and under Aurangzeb, Orthodoxy was definitely in the Imperial saddle.

The half-century of Aurangzeb's rule, again, falls into two approximately equal parts: (i) 1657-81 and (ii) 1681-1707. During the earlier, he was mostly in North India; and in the latter, he was entirely in the South. Of these, the last period was taken up mainly by the struggle against the Marathas, which will be considered in detail in another place. Of his major wars, already dealt with, those against

Bijapur and Golkonda as well as Rajputana, were partly Imperialistic, but more especially provoked by Aurangzeb's religious policy. This, more than anything else, was the root cause of his ultimate failure.

If we overlook his crimes against his father and brothers, Aurangzeb had begun well and displayed great capacity. Undoubtedly he was the most capable of Shah Jahan's sons. Though Dara was the first-born, the Mughal throne was 'no mere elder brother's preserve'. Bernier, who could not forgive Aurangzeb his conduct towards his relations, even considering "the circumstances of country, birth and education," still admitted that he was "endowed with a versatile and rare genius," that he was "a consummate statesman, and a great King". Dara Shukoh, with all his admitted virtues, was too flighty to be successful. But his main "rock of offence", in the eyes of Aurangzeb, was that he was too heretical in his philosophy and conduct. Shuja, too, was a Shia. Hence the hopes of the revivalists were centred in Alamgir who was also, in the popular eye, *Zinda Pir* ('living saint').

This Atlas must our sinking State uphold:

In counsel cool, but in performance bold,

He sums their (brothers') virtues in himself alone.

—Dryden.

Nevertheless, as Khafi Khan observed: "In spite of his devotion, austerity and justice, courage, long-suffering, and sound judgment, every plan and project that he formed came to little good, and every enterprise which he undertook was long in execution and failed of its object." Lane-Poole has compared Aurangzeb to Cromwell with whom he shared many qualities, especially his unbending puritanism, strength of will, deep sincerity of intention, and sternness of character; "but he was lacking in the one thing needful in a leader of men; he could not win love. Such a one may administer an Empire, but he could not rule the hearts of men."

Some recent writers have been either too evasive, apologetic or partisan in dealing with Aurangzeb's religious policy. But few can differ from the following verdict—of Lane-Poole—which does not sacrifice historical veracity at the altar of current sentiment, and characterises Aurangzeb correctly without being unfair to him:

For the first time in their history the Mughals beheld a rigid Muslim in their Emperor—a Muslim as sternly repressive of himself as of his people around him, a King who was prepared to stake his throne for the sake of his faith... He must have been fully conscious of the dangerous path he was pursuing, and well aware that to run

a-tilt against every Hindu sentiment, to alienate his Persian adherents, the flower of his general staff, by deliberate opposition to their cherished ideals, and to disgust his nobles by suppressing the luxury of a jovial court, was to invite revolution. Yet he chose this course, and adhered to this with unbending resolve through close on fifty years of unchallenged sovereignty. (*Medieval India*, p. 70).

Exceptions apart, of *firman*s occasionally breathing a qualified toleration, it cannot be gainsaid that Aurangzeb aimed at the establishment of *Dar-ul-Islam* which implied the eradication of heresy even among the Muslims (to wit, Bijapur and Golkonda) and a calculated and sustained *jihad* against the infidels. The destruction of temples (1669 onwards), the dismissal of Hindus from the Revenue Department (1671), the reimposition of *jiziya* (1679), and so on, were but the alphabet of unmistakable bigotry. In the words of Bakhtawar Khan, author of *Mirat-i-Alam*: "Hindu writers have been entirely excluded from holding public offices, and all the worshipping places of the infidels and the great temples of those infamous people have been thrown down and destroyed in a manner which excites astonishment at the successful completion of so difficult a task." (E. & D. VII, 156-62).

It is to be little wondered at that this *volte face* from the the liberal policy of Akbar, who had attempted the achievement of political and social harmony as the desideratum of a homogeneous State and stable dominion, roused a tempest of revolts all over. Of these, the war in Rajputana was an important part; it was the undoing of the achievement of Akbar. The lifelong struggle against the Marathas—though it was mainly outside the Mughal Empire—was another and more fateful aspect. In 1669 the Jats of Mathura were provoked into a rising, under Gokla of Tilpat, by the oppressions of Abdun Nabi, the local Governor. They murdered Abdun Nabi, and by way of punishment, the Keshav Rai temple was razed to the ground and a mosque built in its place (1670); 7000, including Gokla's family, were forcibly converted to Islam. Again in 1681, 1688, and later, the Jats continued their insurrections under Raja Ram, Churaman, etc., to the very end of Aurangzeb's reign. A more significant rising was that of the *Sat-namis* ('of truthful name') of Narnol and Mewat (Patiala and Alwar). In the words of Ishwar Das, a contemporary historian, "they made no distinction between Hindus and Mussalmans"; and according to Khafi Khan, they were not allowed by their rules "to acquire wealth in any but a lawful calling". Yet, "if anyone

attempts to wrong or oppress them by force, or by exercise of authority, they will not endure it. Many of them have weapons and arms." They rebelled in 1672, but were put down with considerable effort. Next came the outbreak of the Sikhs. We have already alluded to the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675. He had loyally served under Ram Singh in the Assam campaign in 1668; but the religious policy of Aurangzeb now dragged him into the whirlwind. The result was that he, too, was crowned with martyrdom, preferring to give up his head rather than his faith ('*Sir dya aur Sirr na dya*!'). But before his execution, like Rana Pratap of Mewar, he enjoined upon his son, Guru Govind, "the necessity and the merit of revenge."

Lastly, these reactions also affected the Bundelas and the Gondes of Central India. Chhatrasal, son of Champat Rai, was also a loyal servant of the Mughal Emperor until 1670. But like Tegh Bahadur, he too was drawn into the ranks of the rebels by the sectarian oppression of Aurangzeb. He soon gathered such a large following that his influence spread over the entire region between the Narmada and the Jamuna rivers. After several engagements, the Imperialists were obliged to come to terms with the "irrepressible Bundela" in 1705. There were simultaneous risings in the Gond country also. Though in 1609, Kuk Singh, the Raja of Deograh, had been converted to Islam with his entire family in 1686, he was superseded by another claimant who, being likewise converted to Islam, was raised to the throne with the title of Raja Bakht Buland. Nevertheless, Bakht Buland asserted his independence in 1695. He made common cause with Raja Chhatrasal and even carried on negotiations with the Marathas. Early in 1701, with a confederate force of 16,000, he attacked Ali Mardan Khan, Governor of Berar. His allies continued the insurrection even when his brother Naval Shah was killed and he himself was wounded. On the death of Aurangzeb, he enlarged his territories and ruled over the rich lands south of Deogarh, between the Wainganga and Kanhan rivers, including Seoni and Kherla. On the death of his son Chand Sultan in 1739, the Marathas of Nagpur absorbed the Gond principality.

This was where *Dar-ul-Islam* led Alamgir. No stronger indictment of his suicidal policy could be framed than that contained in the letters of Prince Akbar (Aurangzeb's son) and Shivaji. Both invoked the traditions of the greater Akbar, pointed out the folly of reversing his sagacious policy, and uttered the warning: "The day seems near when the palace of the State would be cracked" (Akbar); "Alamgir Padshah has failed and become distracted in the

attempt to merely follow their (i.e. his predecessors') political system" (Shivaji).

NOTE: ON AURANGZEB'S FIRMAN'S

The criticism against Aurangzeb's alleged acts of fanaticism, particularly the destruction of temples, is sought to be modified by reference to some of his *firman's* illustrating the contrary. One of these was addressed to Abul Hasan, Governor of Benares, and dated 15th *Jumada* A.H. 1069 (A.D. 1659). It declares: "Since... all our upright intentions are engaged in promoting the public welfare and bettering the condition of all classes, high and low; therefore, in accordance with our Holy Law, we have decided that ancient temples shall not be overthrown, but that new ones shall not be built." This is the qualified toleration referred to in the text.

There are also two other *firman's*, dated 17th *Rabi* ii, A.H. 1091 and A.H. 1098, which are cited as declaring grants of land to two Hindus, Bhagawant Goshain and Ramjivan Goshain, of Benares. "It is, however, to be noted that both of them are conditioned by the clause : "...so that he may continue with peace of mind to offer up prayers for the continuation of our God-given Empire that is to last for ever."* (Cf. Zahir-ud-Din Faruqi, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, pp.131-2).

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CHAPTER FOUR

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

1. *The Medieval State.* 2. *Mughal Improvements.* 3. *Mechanism of the State.* 4. *Defence of the Realm.* 5. *Fiscal Administration.* 6. *Judicial Administration.* 7. *Local Administration.*

1. *The Medieval State*

WE have stated at the outset that the beginnings of Modern India are to be properly traced to the advent of the Mughals. We have so far seen how the advance of the Mughals was facilitated by the political disruption of medieval India. We have also noted the nature of the Mughal conquest of India and the manner in which the new conquerors consolidated their gains. We have, besides, observed that, for the permanent establishment of a stable dominion, mere military conquest and consolidation are insufficient, and that, for its achievement, an efficient administrative organisation acceptable to the people is very necessary. The Mughals, before they could build anew, had, no doubt, to destroy and sweep away much; but they did not, or could not, make a clean sweep. "History," it is said, "is a seamless web": that is to say, it is a record of continuous human activity. We always build, consciously or unawares, on the relics or foundations of the past. The Mughal administrative organisation was, therefore, not built in a void: it was not a total innovation. Substantially, they made use of the existing machinery, but effected improvements which in course of time, changed the character of the government so as to make it more efficient as well as more acceptable to the people. It will be helpful to a better understanding of their system if we make a preliminary survey of their governmental inheritance.

It is well to remember that over three centuries of Muslim rule in India (A.D. 1206-1526) had not succeeded in eliminating all Hindu kingdoms from the country, and that even within the territories covered by the jurisdiction of the Sultans, the vast majority of the people remained Hindus. These conditions vitally affected the character of the medieval Muslim State in India. We shall deal with the Hindu heritage in a later chapter. The most important factor that the Sultanate had to reckon with was, not so much the existence of independent Hindu kingdoms outside their jurisdiction, as the insurmountable fact of the larger number of their subjects being Hindus. Since these

could not be converted into Muslims, the rulers were obliged to adjust themselves to the realities of the situation. They could not succeed beyond their capacity to effect these adjustments.

To begin with, Islamic polity was a Theocracy: that is to say, the Prophet, and after him the Khalifa, was the sovereign head of the Muslim community, spiritually as well as temporally. Socially they constituted a democracy: all Muslims were like brothers. Politically the Khalifa was at first elected, but later, his office became hereditary with fatal consequences. The last Khalifa of the Abbasid dynasty, Al Mustasim, was killed by Hulagu (leader of the Mongols) in A.D. 1258. Even before that, the rise of the Ghaznavid and Ghurid Sultans had demonstrated the political impotence of the Caliphate, in spite of the fact that these upstarts formally pretended to bow to the suzerainty of the Commander of the Faithful. Iltutmish, the first powerful Sultan of Delhi, described himself as "Aid of the Commander of the Faithful". But when the Caliphate of Baghdad was wiped out, though a second one arose at Cairo, the Indian Sultans, except when they were in extreme distress, ignored the traditional claims of the Khalifa and declared themselves virtual sovereigns. The *Khutba*, or Friday prayer, thus came to be read in the name of the Sultan instead of that of the Khalifa as was done traditionally. This was the first move of the Sultans away from orthodox moorings. It had important consequences.

According to the strict Law of Islam, the conquered people could either become converts to Islam or suffer death. The only concession that ultimately came to be shown to them was to allow them the status of *Zimmis*, or those who paid the *jiziya* and obeyed the Muslim sovereign. In India, the extreme demands of Muslim orthodoxy were summed up by the Qazi of Biana, in the time of Ala-ud-din Khalji, when he declared: "The Prophet has said that they (the infidels) should either embrace Islam or they should be slain or enslaved, and their property should be confiscated to the State. No one except the great Doctor Abu Hanifa allows the imposition of the *jiziya* upon Hindus; while other schools are of opinion that there is no other alternative for them but death or Islam". Obviously, the Sultans who were called upon to rule in a land where it was not practicable to carry out these extreme views, found it necessary to break away from orthodoxy more and more. Ala-ud-din Khalji frankly confessed: "I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful. Whatever I think to be for the good of the State, or suitable for the emergency, that I decree. For what may happen to me on the Day of

Judgment, that I know not". It was inevitable, therefore, that *duniyadari* should sooner or later be substituted for *dindari*: in other words, the claims of the secular world were more imperious than those of orthodox Islam.

Among the prohibitions inculcated by Islam were those against the taking or offering of interest on loans, and the award of capital punishment to Muslims. But reasons of State very soon liquidated the distinction between *halal* and *haram*. Moreover, the Turkish conquerors of India had come under the influence of Iran, whose monarchical and cultural traditions they imbibed. Apart from the enjoyment of other luxuries, the habit of drinking wine had become second nature with many of the Sultans. Such leniency towards oneself, especially in a country whose atmosphere was un-Islamic, was calculated to lead to a similar relaxation of other rigid regulations of Muslim orthodoxy. The Turk was, no doubt, to begin with, fanatical in religious matters. But long association with the Hindus in society, in the services, and perhaps most of all in the *harém*, softened the edge of his original bigotry. Though, during the Sultanate period, we do not see him go far enough in his liberalism, at least one of the Sultans—Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir, A.D. 1420-70—made bold to prohibit the slaughter of cows to placate Hindu sentiment, and abolished the *jiziya*. From this to the liberal innovations of the Imperial Mughals was not a far cry.

Another problem of vital importance to the very existence of the medieval State was defence. Having conquered the country, they had to keep it. Like the Spartans, in the midst of hostile populations, the Muslims could not shed their essentially military character. Besides having to maintain themselves against near rivals to the throne, the Sultans had to keep their Hindu subjects in perpetual subjection, put down the revolts of the more recalcitrant among their vassals, and at the same time defend the north-western frontier of India against the persistent danger from fresh invaders. The Mongols, who had overthrown the Caliphate, were a constant menace to the Indian Sultans as well. Even after they had been converted, tamed and absorbed, during the long period covered by the reigns of the Slaves, the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs, the Sultanate had still to face the invasion of Timur (A.D. 1399). The needs of security, internal and external, therefore, determined the character of the Delhi Sultanate, even more than the dictates of Islam. The troubles of the rulers arose more often from the Muslims than from the Hindus. The latter were more readily tamed and harnessed than the former.

In the absence of a recognised rule of succession, such as primogeniture, dynastic annals are invariably punctuated with palace revolutions. Besides, the Turks and the Afghans were divided into various tribes, like the Ilbari, Khalji, Tughlaq, Lodi, Sur, and so on. Since, as a rule, the Sultan was set on the throne by one or the other among these tribes, their rivals were ever anxious to find an opportunity for their own advancement by setting up a ruler of their own tribe. The only way to keep them down was to repress them by force of arms or to purchase their loyalty with the spoils of war or office. *Jihad* against the infidels was a convenient technique by which the several objectives could be gained simultaneously. This accounts for at least part of the official tyranny over the Hindus even when the Sultan and his supporters did not care enough for Islam to regulate their own personal conduct according to its inhibitions. The Khalji regime provides illustrations of almost all the characteristic traits of the Sultanate period.

The weak and senile Jalal-ud-din was raised to the throne by means of a palace revolution engineered by the members of the Khalji tribe. The unscrupulous Ala-ud-din captured power by the commission of one of the most atrocious murders in history. He then bolstered up his regime by the most lavish distribution among his supporters of the rich loot he had gathered from the Hindu kingdoms of the South. Frankly heretical in his own conduct and policy, he posed as the champion of his creed only by the oppression of his Hindu subjects. He entered on a programme of conquest and aggrandisement in order to divert the turbulent elements within his State into channels which kept them at a safe distance from the throne, and, at the same time, brought him glory as well as plunder. All the strength that he thus gathered was utilised in keeping off the Mongol invaders on his frontier, and enforcing an oppressive peace at home. In maintaining his personal autocracy, Ala-ud-din had recourse to many social, economic and political controls which, like one of our modern dictatorships, imparted to his administration a ruthless efficiency. Though his rule was short-lived, his system provided clues to real efficiency for humaner autocrats who came long after him. Meanwhile, the boomerang returned on him and his dynasty and shattered the machine he had so cleverly devised.

The fundamental weakness of the medieval State was however, its feudal character. The governors of the outlying provinces were virtually sovereign within their respective jurisdictions. They were often the actual conquerors of the districts which they governed, owning only

nominal allëgiance to the Sultan at Delhi. A masterful suzerain like Alā-ud-din Khalji kept them firmly under his control by vigilant centralising efforts. But as a rule, the Sultans were content with farming out the revenues of the provinces to the highest bidders, among the fief-holders or other adventurers, who squeezed the people as well as cheated the central treasury in the payment of stipulated amounts. The disruption of the Tughlaq Empire was largely due to this evil. Under the Lodis, owing to the tribal basis of their organisation, the fissiparous tendencies were further accentuated. For the Afghans, the Sultan was only a tribal chieftain, the first among equals, with many a rival for the honour.

Such was the nature of the medieval State when the Mughals entered India, in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

2. Mughal Improvements

The polity which the Mughal Emperors built up was a distinct improvement upon their political inheritance. They brought to bear upon the situation both a fresh and liberal mind and greater capacity for administration. They lifted the State out of the medieval ruts and imparted to it many a modern characteristic. Their administrative system was not without its defects, and these ultimately led to its failure and supersession; but that it endured during well-nigh two centuries (1557-1757) was due to its undoubted merits. Some of the defects were inherent in the situation and the institution of monarchy; others were the outcome of the character and policy of some of the Emperors. We shall critically examine the defects after we have described and assessed the better features of the Mughal administrative organisation which resulted in making India a more modern country than she was when the Mughals first entered in 1526.

The distinguishing mark of the Muslim State in India before the time of Babur was that the government persistently maintained the distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. Since the vast majority of the people of the land belonged to the latter class, and had to be kept well in hand by constant coercion, and also because of the other conditions described above, the Sultanate could not outgrow the limitations of an essentially Police or Military State. Not only did it lack the sense of unity and harmony between the rulers and the ruled, but its administrative organisation was crude and undeveloped. Owing to its rigid feudal character, it was incohesive from the point of view of a national State, and it stultified the natural growth

of the people. The stream of national life in all its aspects appeared to have reached a dead end whence there could be no further progress, unless the way was opened up by a new race of men. They now came in the person of the Mughal Emperors.

The most striking characteristic of these new conquerors was that they—at any rate the first six of them—were men with boundless energy directed towards the building up of a new State. They were not only great conquerors, but also creative statesmen, with a continuity of purpose running through several generations of successive rulers. As men, Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, differed from one another in their individual character; but in their Imperial ambitions and persistent efforts to create a Mughal dominion in this country, they were all united to a single end. The pioneering spadework of Babur, the perseverance of even the shilly-shallying Humayun, the statesmanship and genius of Akbar, the continued adherence to the Imperial ideal of the ease-loving Jahangir and the grandeur-loving Shah Jahan, and the apparently reactionary regime of the bigoted Aurangzeb, were all calculated or intended to perpetuate the new State, as each of them conceived it. Individual notes varied, but the symphony of the Imperial chorus remained the same. There was one interlude—that of Sher Shah Sur: but he too made very important contributions towards the creation of the new State.

We have pointed out in an earlier section of this book that the three decades preceding the commencement of the reign of Akbar, though they were outwardly marked by the life-and-death struggle for political survival between the Mughals and the Afghans, also constituted in their true inward significance, the seed-time of a new age. The superstructure that Akbar and his successors raised had for its foundation the preliminary work, not only of the first two Mughal Emperors, but also of the enemy of their race and house, the Afghan Sher Shah. As a matter of fact, from the point of view of administrative organisation, the contributions of Sher Shah were far more important and valuable than those of his Mughal predecessors.

Babur had neither the time nor the capacity for any administrative achievement. Although his assumption of the high-sounding title of *Padshah*, in place of the humbler one of *Amir* or *Mirza*, indicated his Imperial ambitions, in the organisation of his conquests he could think of nothing better than military fiefs distributed among his sons and officers. He undertook the building of gardens and cities and lavished his treasures on advertising his victories

throughout the Muslim world; but when he died, he left a bankrupt treasury to his successor. He was a gifted general and a great tactician, as his victories in battle showed; but his division of the Empire among his sons and the advice he gave Humayun to be kind to his treacherous brother Kamran, indicated more his humanity than his political sagacity.

If Babur was a successful man of action, his son and successor Humayun, was a poet cursed with the misfortune of being called upon to defend an ill-organised Empire against a clever and capable enemy like Sher Shah. Even as a prince, he had worried his father by relinquishing his post of duty on the frontier, without permission, when he was expected to hold Balkh and Badakhshan against the Uzbeks who were the most dangerous external enemies of the Empire. Internally, there was a conspiracy to supersede Humayun; but his succession was ensured by the affection his father bore towards him and the compact he exacted from his officers. Yet the trouble that his brothers Kamran, Hindal and Askeri gave Humayun throughout their lifetime, revealed the dangers to which the Mughal dynasty was constantly exposed. Humayun was exceedingly superstitious and his ideas about government and administrative organisation were fantastic, more poetical than political.* Hence, even if he had not to face so consummate a foe as Sher Shah, it is more than doubtful whether he could have retained his patrimony intact. His only contribution to the development of Mughal polity was his gifted son Akbar.

Akbar was undoubtedly the most talented among the Mughal Emperors, and he did more to modernise medieval India than any other ruler. He has been rightly described by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as "the Father of Indian Nationalism"; yet he owed more to Sher Shah than his friend Abul Fazl was prepared to admit. We have also noted already how Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir anticipated Akbar in the abolition of the *jiziya* and cow-killing. Though Sher Shah was the greatest administrator produced by the Afghan race in India, as his biographer, Dr. K. R. Qanungo has characterised him, it is possible that his

* e.g. According to his contemporary historian Khwandamir, Humayun set apart only such days of the week as he considered auspicious for the transaction of State business: Thursdays and Saturdays were devoted to religious men and literati, Sundays and Tuesdays to the details of civil and military administration, Fridays to assemblies, and Mondays and Wednesdays to music and merry-making. He also held his court in different halls on different days, according to the planetary positions, and special liveries were prescribed to suit each occasion.

achievements have been exaggerated by his admirers. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Akbar built on the foundations laid by his great Afghan predecessor. Dr. P. Saran, who has challenged some of the statements and conclusions of Qanungo regarding the achievements of Sher Shah, acknowledges that Sher Shah brought about a reorganisation of the political divisions of the Empire into *subahs*, *sarkars*, *parganahs*, etc. on a rational basis. "In fact", he writes, "Sher Shah's organisation was preserved and followed until Akbar undertook a redistribution of the Empire into 12 *subahs* in 1581." To Sher Shah is also due the credit for the centralisation, systematisation and popularisation of the administration, which were the outstanding features of the Mughal system as well. The detailed implications of this will be brought out in the succeeding pages, but a few illustrations may be given here.

Although, like Babur, Sher Shah sat on the throne of Delhi only for five years, he left behind him more than a mere territorial legacy. In the first place, he tried to unify and integrate the scattered provinces by creating a machinery of government in which all power would be vested in himself at the centre. Thereby a paramountcy was superimposed upon the loose federation of Afghan tribal polity, and the ground was prepared for greater centralisation under Akbar. Secondly, he attempted to standardise the entire administration of the country and to impart to it a political unity by the establishment, all over Hindusthan, of a network of roads and *serais*, the routine transfer of officials from one province to another, the construction of new fortresses at strategic points equipped in a manner prescribed by the central authority, and the regular collection of revenue according to rules based on principles more rational than those that obtained under the arbitrary government of the earlier Sultans. More than anything else, Sher Shah tried to bridge the gulf between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects by providing equal amenities for all travellers at the *serais*, by the employment of Hindus in the administration to a larger extent than ever before, by fostering the peasantry which formed the backbone of the country and by his high sense of justice. Nevertheless, he failed to reach the height to which Zain-ul-Abidin and Akbar rose, because he did not abolish the *jiziya* which was the canonical mark of discrimination in a Muslim State. Sher Shah's polity, therefore, just fell short of attempting complete national unity; the retention of that medieval criterion showed that Sher Shah was the last, though also the best of the medieval Sultans,

rather than the first of the modern Emperors of India. This latter distinction belongs to Akbar alone.

The most important service that Akbar rendered to the making of modern India was to place before the country, for the first time since the coming of the Muslims, the vision of a homogeneous nation. This involved the elimination of all distinctions based on religion and race, between his various subjects, for purposes of public employment and opportunities for self-advancement. The Hindus could then fill, by sheer merit, any place or office that had hitherto been open only to a Muslim by virtue of his religion. The public services were manned by persons centrally selected and governed by regulations which were well defined. Something like the modern rule of law took the place of the absolutely arbitrary government of the Sultans. '*Zabita'inast*' (this is the law) and '*zabita nist*' (this is not according to the law) were phrases which came to be used frequently in the Mughal offices even before the highest dignitaries of the State. All provinces were ruled alike; the same coinage, weights and measures, the same official language, procedure and rules of conduct obtained currency in all parts of the Mughal Empire. In short, centralisation, systematisation, standardisation, and to a very large extent secularisation of the administration were achieved.

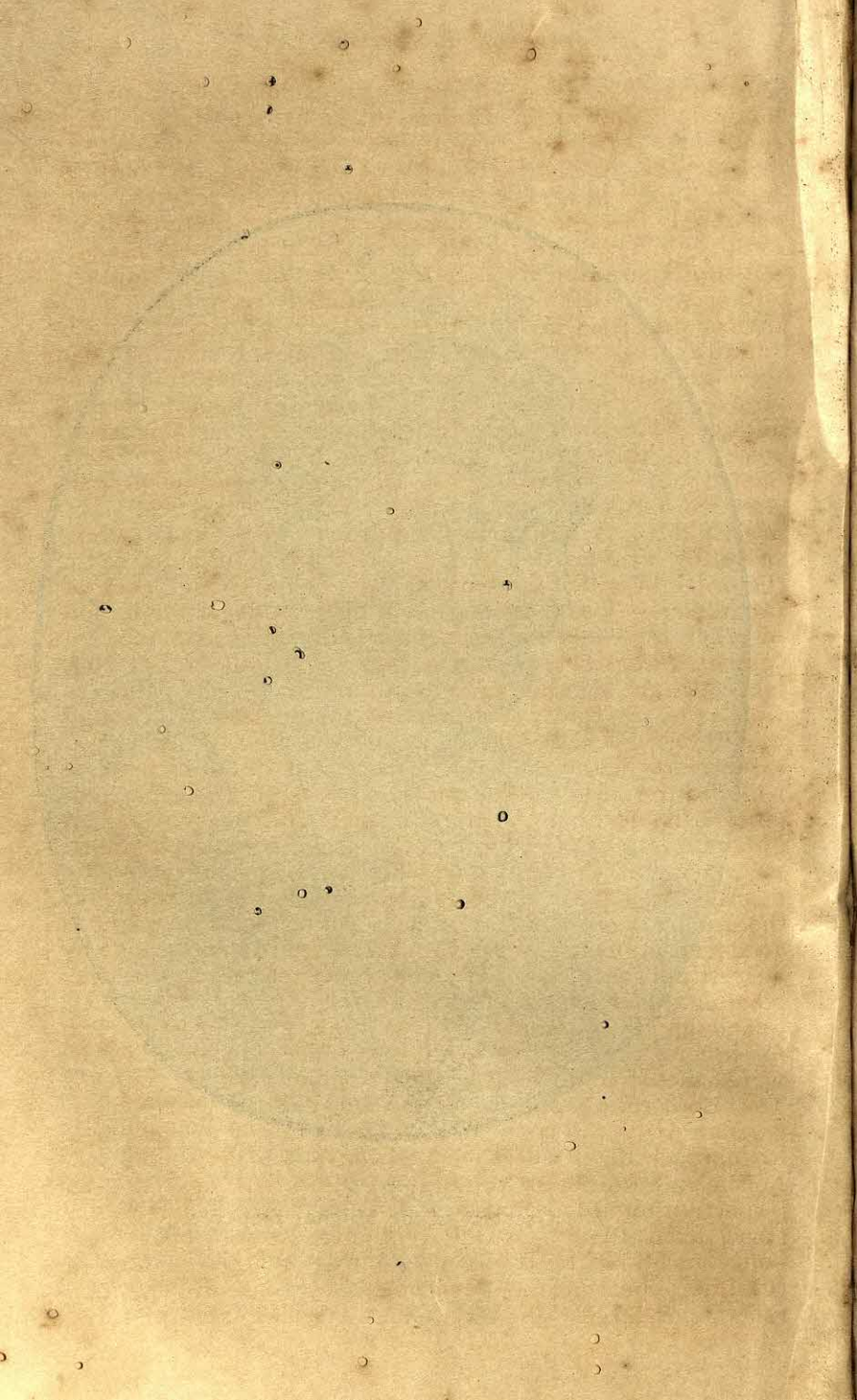
3. Mechanism of the State

Before the time of the Mughals, the structure of the State, or rather the mechanism of government, was quite simple. The Sultan at the top and centre was the creator and absolute master of such machinery of administration as existed. The traditional number of ministers of State was four: (i) the *Vazir*, (ii) the *Divan-i-risalat*, (iii) the *Divan-i-'arz* and (iv) the *Divan-i-insha'*. These functioned mostly at the capital though they exercised such control over the provinces as was called for or found possible from time to time. We shall deal with the Provincial and Local governments later. The Empire being a feudal mosaic of military fiefs and vassal principalities in varying states of allegiance to the Sultan, direct government was practically confined to Delhi and its immediate neighbourhood.

Under the Mughals, the administration was better organised, the provinces were better integrated with the Centre, and their governmental machinery was an exact replica of that at the metropolis. Although the number of their chief ministers continued to be the same as under the Sultanate, their designations as well as duties varied, and their work was shared among several other ministers of subordi-



AKBAR
The Greatest of the Mughal Emperors.



nate rank. The office of the *Vazir* came to be gradually liquidated, and his place was taken by the *Vakil* whose rank, as the highest minister of State, became merely ornamental. At one time the *Vazir* had stood next only to the Sultan, whose delegated sovereignty he reflected and exercised; there was no department of the State, civil or military, over which he did not or could not wield his all-but-supreme authority. Under the Sultanate his military authority was the first to be taken away from him. Even then, he eclipsed all the other ministers as one who stood "midway between the sovereign and his subjects". Under the Mughals the *Vazir*, when he existed, or the *Vakil*, enjoyed only prestige without power. In point of real authority the four ministers of Akbar and his successors were: (1) the *Divan*, (2) the *Mir Bakhshi*, (3) the *Mir Saman* and (4) the *Sadr*. The *Divan* now became the first effective minister of importance. Though theoretically the *Mir Bakhshi*, the *Mir Saman* and *Sadr* were equal to him in status, as a matter of fact, their power diminished in the order in which we have named them. Though each of the ministers was independent in his own department, and together they had no joint-responsibility as in a modern cabinet, Akbar saw to it that they came into regular contact with one another in determining matters of policy as well as in the routine business of administration. Though the Emperor's will was supreme and he merely 'heard rather than listened to' the counsels of his ministers, he widened the sphere of his advisers by requiring all his high officers, nobles and courtiers, to meet in a bigger Council for some time. It is true the ministers were mere dignified secretaries of the Emperor who could appoint, promote, degrade or dismiss them at his discretion or caprice; yet there were few instances of such arbitrary action without good cause. Thus, in the Mughal Empire there was the nearest approach to 'government by consultation' that was possible under an autocratic monarchy.

Though the Mughals came to India as conquerors and foreigners, they set up traditions and conventions which were calculated to endear them to their Indian subjects. The Emperor's appearance at the *jharoka* for popular *darshan* daily, the opportunities they afforded to the people to approach them with their petitions, their personal attention to minute details of administration, and their regular inspection tours and pageants throughout the Empire, even apart from their generally enlightened and benevolent policy in all matters, served to impart to their autocratic rule the appearance of government by consent. This character was largely the creation of Akbar's statesmanship.

It was sustained during the next two reigns, of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, but was progressively undermined by the reactionary policy of Aurangzeb. Nevertheless, the main framework of the administrative organisation, though in a considerably attenuated form, endured till the English East India Company stepped into the shoes of the Mughal Emperors.

The *Divan* was, from the ninth year of Akbar's reign, the chief executive officer; he was also in charge of revenue and finance. He had powers of supervision over all other officials, central and provincial, from the governors to the *amils* and *patwaris*. As revenue and finance minister, he scrutinised the account of every *dam* or *pie* that came into or went out of the treasury. His office being thus of key importance, only men of the highest and most tested merit were appointed to it. As Ibn Hasan has remarked: "Akbar respected them for their efficiency and loyalty, but he never sacrificed discipline; and proper action was taken whenever any occasion arose for it. He left behind him a tradition for placing the right man in the right place, and made efficiency and loyalty the sole test for promotion and distinction." There was no fixed tenure for any office, and changes were made according to the needs of the situation. Since the creation of that high office, during the forty-two remaining years of Akbar's reign, there were in all ten *Divans*. They served from one to fourteen years. Muzaffar Khan was the first (11 years), Raja Todar Mall the best known (19 years), Qulij Khan the longest in office (14 years), and Muqim the last (1 year).² Muqim was continued by Jahangir as his first *Divan*. Khwaja Shah Mansur was executed for high treason after having served as *Divan* for three years; and Rai Patar Das, was removed from office, within a year, for receiving bribes. On the other hand, most of these high officials rose to the top by sheer merit from the lowest ranks and retained their position during good behaviour or until their services were required somewhere else. The greatest of the *Divans* under Jahangir was Ghiyas Beg *Itimad-ud-Daula* (father of Nur Jahan), and under Shah Jahan, Sa'dulla Khan. The latter was well known for his independence and integrity of character. "Loyalty to the salt", he declared, "is an approved principle; but, in matters of the master which concern the poor, loyalty consists in having regard for the latter."

The *Mir Bakhshi* of the Mughals corresponds to the *Divan-i-'arz* of the Sultanate. Imad-ul-mulk, who occupied this office under Balban, is reported by Barani to have remarked: "The king is the master of the army; I am its chief, and the army is the defender of the subjects and the domi-

nions". The chief *Bakhshi* was the head of the military department, and his duties were: "the recruitment of the army, the maintenance of the troops in good order, holding of military tests, the inspection of horses, and the muster of troops at regular intervals, and equipping them for expeditions." Although he is described by some writers as the Imperial Pay-Master, as most of the officers were *mansabdars* with military assignments, he was directly responsible for the disbursement of salaries and other expenditure only when the army was actually on the field. Ordinarily these matters were dealt with through the office of the *Divan*.

There does not appear to have been any minister under the Sultanate exactly corresponding to the *Mir Saman* or *Khan Saman* of the Mughals. In general terms, this dignity may be described as the Imperial Steward or Store-keeper. According to Aff, in the time of Firuz Shah Tughlaq, there were several *amirs* in charge of the different *karkhanas* with Khwaja Abul Hasan as their head. We do not know what his designation was. Under the Mughals this department came to occupy a very important place. The *Mir Saman* or *Khan Saman* worked in association with the *Divan-i-Buyutat* and several *Daroghas*, each in charge of a *karkhana*, and a *Mustaufi* or Auditor. They together looked after the purchase and maintenance of stores, civil and military, including the private purchases of the Emperor's household. The last named duty was in course of time assigned to another officer called the *Darogha* of the *Ghusal Khana* who was the Emperor's personal secretary.

In Islamic tradition the Sultan's duties were both religious and secular. The *Divan-i-risalat* helped in the former and the *Divan-i-insha'* in the latter sphere. During the Mughal period their functions were distributed among several departments. The work of the *Divan-i-insha'* was chiefly that of drafting and dispatch of the Sultan's *firman*s and letters, etc. Under the Mughals this work was subject to an elaborate process, starting with the drafting by the *Vaqi'a navis* (of whom there were two in attendance on the Emperor at a time) and ending with the setting of the Imperial seal. The *Divan-i-risalat* looked after spiritual matters, religious endowments, stipends to scholars and pious men, and administration of justice. The *Sadr-us-sudur* was at its head. The most important change introduced by the Mughals was to separate the judicial from the rest of the *Sadr's* functions. We shall deal with the judicial administration of the Mughals in a subsequent section. Under them the *Sadr's* duties were confined to the supervision of education and the distribution of grants to

learned men and religious institutions. Akbar personally scrutinised the working of this department and finding that it had become a hot-bed of corruption, he severely restricted its scope and emoluments. He treated the *ulama* and the *qazis* very much as the Tudors did the monastic orders.

Briefly, the machinery of Mughal government, though it was derived from earlier foundations, was more elaborate, more efficient, more rationally organised, and geared to fulfil more enlightened and beneficial purposes. It was based upon a division of the earlier *Vazir's* concentrated authority among several new ministers. Their functions were separated departmentally, but co-ordinated through the personal direction of the Emperor. Independent high personages were sometimes asked to supervise the working of the more important departments, thereby exercising a salutary check on the ministers. The sovereign consulted all of them, severally as well as collectively, but acted according to his own best judgment, "If, however, any of them does not agree with him", writes Monserrate, "he listens patiently, and sometimes even alters his own opinion." By their vigilance, tact, and keen personal interest, as well as genuine desire for justice and benevolence, the Mughal Emperors converted a medieval into a well-run modern government. This was largely due to their essentially secular policies and the standardisation of rules and procedures. More than anything else, with the singular exception of Aurangzeb, they made no distinction between their subjects on grounds of religion, and afforded free scope for the employment of talent, whereby the meanest clerk could, by dint of merit, rise to be the *Vakil* of the Empire.

4. Defence of the Realm

No State can survive without the power to maintain sovereign authority over its subjects and territorial integrity against foreign attacks or disruptive forces from within. In modern States this power is derived from the patriotism of the people, the goodwill of the Government, the police and the military (now comprising the land, air and naval arms). In medieval India, owing to the absence or weakness of the first two moral conditions, the rulers, who were foreign conquerors, had to depend mostly on the military and police forces. Indeed the distinction between the last two instruments of coercion open to governments is comparatively modern, and did not exist in earlier times so clearly. Owing to the limitations of the authority of the Central Government under feudal conditions, policing

in normal times was done by local bodies like the village communities. It was only with the better organisation of the entire administration by the Mughal Emperors that these functions were attended to by the sovereign at the centre. Even then the central officers supplemented rather than replaced the traditional agencies. During the time of Sher Shah the detection of crime and the bringing of culprits to book was fixed as the responsibility of the *shiqdars* or police officials and the *muqaddams* or headmen of the villages. If they were found to neglect their duties, they were punished because, as the *Tarikh-i-Shershahi* puts it, "it has been generally ascertained that theft and highway robberies (and murders) can only take place with the connivance of these headmen." Under the Mughals the *kotwal* looked after the maintenance of law and order with the assistance of the *faujdar*. His duties included (i) keeping watch at night and patrolling the cities, (ii) apprehending thieves and other criminals, (iii) maintaining registers of citizens and their houses and observing the movements of strangers, and (iv) employing spies to help the authorities in their criminal investigations. The more vital and difficult part of the Central Government was, however, to control the feudal nobility and vassal princes and to defend the realm against the attacks of either neighbouring rulers or more dangerous enemies from beyond the borders of India.

During the period of the Sultanate all the energy of the rulers of Delhi was engrossed by the feudal anarchy within the country and the recurring menace of the Mongols on the north-west frontier. How vulnerable the country was, in spite of Ala-ud-din Khalji's strenuous efforts to build up a strong military system, and Firuz Tughlaq's efforts to establish a benevolent State, was demonstrated by the successful invasions of Timur and Babur. The tribal regime of the Lodis, between the two foreign incursions, had only served to accentuate the evils within the country beyond all hopes of recovery under the old order. The Sur interlude pointed the way out of the medieval chaos and raised hopes, but it proved abortive. The military triumphs of Babur in India were due to (1) the personal qualities of the veteran general, (2) the racial pride and homogeneity of the Mughals, (3) the use of better tactics and better weapons like artillery, and (4) the inherent weakness of his opponents. The reversal of fortunes under Humayun showed that the Mughal army was not invincible when its "thunder was stolen" by the opposing forces. The Afghans succeeded for the time being, because in their turn they enjoyed the same advantages. But they failed

to consolidate their gains and make them permanent, partly because Sher Shah was not lucky enough to be followed by equally capable successors, and partly because the Afghans had developed no roots in the native soil and no capacity to outgrow their tribal weaknesses. Nevertheless, Sher Shah made important contributions to the improvement of the country's defences. As noticed already, he created a network of roads, like the Grand Trunk Road, across Hindusthan, built new forts, like 'Little Rohtas', or strengthened old ones at strategic points with garrisons and arms, and introduced better discipline and fighting spirit within the army. By his political reforms, too, he tried to build up the internal strength of his State through the prosperity, contentment and sense of security of his subjects; but he could not surmount the barrier of the *jiziya* which still sundered Hindus from Muslims. The Hindus, i.e., the vast majority of his subjects, could not, therefore, feel any affection for a government which still bore the stamp of alien dominion, though Sher Shah and his successors were Indian-born Muslims. The next great step forward was taken by Akbar.

The Mughals, too, like their predecessors, built from the top, a feature which fundamentally enfeebled the structure of their State; but in most other respects they greatly improved the defensive position of the country. In the first place, by the abolition of the *jiziya*, and other salutary reforms, they reduced the gulf between the rulers and the ruled. Secondly, by the centralisation of the entire administrative machinery, they corrected many evils of the feudal system which they had inherited. Thirdly, by the introduction of the Mansabdari principle and the complete reorganisation of the civil and military services, they made for greater discipline and efficiency among the servants of the State. Their winning of the affections and loyalty of the people and general improvement of the finances, which were other valuable assets of the Mughal government, have been noticed elsewhere. Here we shall examine the defence organisation in the narrower sense of the term, viz., the military and naval arms of the State.

The Mughals were undoubtedly greater builders than all their Muslim predecessors in India. They erected, not only magnificent palaces and tombs, but also splendid fortresses like those of Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Lahore, etc., and vastly improved the means of communication by roads, rivers and canals, throughout their Empire. By the establishment of *Dak Chowki*s and the appointment of an army of spies and other official reporters all over the Empire, the Emperors and governors kept themselves very

well informed of whatever was happening within the country from day to day. The reporters were given drastic punishment for lapses in their onerous duties. Not only did the Emperors move constantly with their armies in the various parts of their dominions, to overawe or suppress revolts, but they were also in constant communication with their provincial governors and other officers scattered throughout the Empire. The steel-frame which held the entire mechanism of government, civil as well as military, was the *Mansabdari* organisation.

That system was not entirely an invention of Akbar's. It was based on a combination of several elements drawn from Chenghiz Khan's organisation of his army on the one hand, and the feudal and tribal organisations that existed in India before the time of Akbar, on the other. Its units were multiples of ten—10, 20, 30 . . . 100, 1,000, 10,000 and so on—as in the time of Akbar's great ancestor; so also was the aristocratic character of that Imperial order reminiscent of its ancestral prototype. As under the feudal system, it rested on assignments of land combined with obligations of military service. But unlike the feudal law of succession which was hereditary, the *Mansabdari* titles to estates ceased with the death of their holders. Moreover, the *jagirs* conferred upon a *Mansabdar* could be reduced, or even entirely taken away from him, under certain conditions of unsatisfactory conduct. All lands, in theory, belonged to the Emperor. He could give them to any one or take them away at his pleasure. Sub-infeudation was, therefore, not possible, as all *Mansabdars*, from the smallest to the highest, were directly created by the Emperor. So they were entirely dependent upon him, unlike the feudal nobles. Besides, the assignment was primarily in terms of horses, not in terms of land. The salaries or emoluments were fixed in cash, in the first instance, and when *jagirs* were granted to the holders of higher ranks in the *Mansabdari* order, it was only as a matter of convenience to link up their revenues with the emoluments of the assignees who were expected to maintain a prescribed number of horses, troops, and other equipment. These would be the first charge on the revenues of the assigned *jagir*. Lastly, in terms of army organisation, although recruits from all classes, Irani, Turani, Afghan, Baluchi, Arab, Rumi, Firangi, Indian Muslim, Habshi, Rajput, Jat, and other Hindus were freely enrolled, they were attached, as a rule, to regiments or units made up chiefly of their respective class, clan or tribe. Where non-tribal or heterogeneous men were admitted at all, the proportion of such to the tribal core of the unit was rigidly prescribed. For instance, in a Turani regi-

ment, ordinarily, not more than a third could be Afghans or any other, though in some cases a unit was equally shared between men of three different races. But Rajput regiments were entirely composed of their own clansmen and led by their own hereditary chiefs. This made for harmony, cohesion, loyalty, efficiency and natural discipline born of a sense of personal honour. Besides, the racial and tribal organisation of the army enabled the Imperial masters to use selected units against people of a different origin.

A feature of the *Mansabdari* system which has exercised the minds of scholars is the distinction between the *Zat* and *Sawar* ranks. It did not exist before the time of Akbar who introduced it for a reason which well illustrates the genius of its inventor. Every *Mansabdar* above the rank of 300 in the time of Akbar, and above 500 in later times, had a double rank; e.g. 750 *Zat* and 500 *Sawar*. In some cases, the *Zat* and *Sawar* figures were identical, but the latter never exceeded the former. The fact was that *Zat* merely indicated the social status of its holder, while the *Sawar* rank laid down the minimum force that the *Mansabdar* was expected to maintain. In the time of Sher Shah and earlier, military fief-holders received emoluments in cash or land or both, on the basis of the troops they were supposed to engage, but rarely did, in practice. The stipulated forces included cavalry as well as infantry. The system of branding horses, introduced by Ala-ud-din Khalji and revived by Sher Shah and Akbar, was intended as a check on the fraudulent practice of temporarily borrowed animals being paraded at the time of official reviews. Under feudal conditions, the Sultan had not the strength or courage to enforce the standard regulations in the case of powerful nobles. Akbar, therefore, cleverly left an upper margin of theoretical rank to cover the empty and false prestige of its holders, but prescribed an agreed and enforceable minimum which could be exacted in practice. This device could work more satisfactorily because the Mughal hierarchy was official and not feudal. *Mansabdars* above the rank of 1,000 were called *Amirs* or *Umara* and they constituted the Mughal aristocracy.* The highest rank open to a nobleman was ordinarily 7,000, though Asaf Khan was raised, as a solitary exception under Shah Jahan, to 9,000. Above them were princes of the Imperial family who held ranks up to 40,000.

* From 5,000 downwards, an officer was First Class (or grade), if his rank in *Zat* and *Sawar* were equal; Second Class, if *Sawar* was half of the *Zat* rank; and Third Class, if *Sawar* was less than half of *Zat*, or did not at all exist.

Further improvements were also effected by Akbar to make the army a more dependable instrument than what it had been before his time. Since the *Mansabdars* were distributed all over the Empire, and they were responsible for the equipment and discipline of the forces under them, the system secured a large degree of automatic decentralisation. Nevertheless, central control could be effective, in as much as the posts were not hereditary but held during good behaviour. Cash payments from the Imperial exchequer were generally preferred to assignments in land. The *Dagh* or branding system was perfected by means of double branding: each horse bore the Imperial stamp as well as that of the *Mansabdar*. These brands were to be renewed periodically at stated intervals, not exceeding a maximum of six years in very rare cases. Descriptive muster-rolls (*chihrah*) were kept for both men and animals, copies of which were deposited in the Imperial secretariat. A code of penalties was drawn up for failure to conform to the detailed prescriptions.

The army was composed of cavalry, infantry, elephants, camels and artillery. There were also miscellaneous camp-followers with innumerable draught animals for carrying supplies. A special class of troops, known as the *Ahadi*, were always in attendance with the Emperor, mounting guard over the palaces, courts and Imperial offices. There were matchlock-men who were called *bandukchi*, and artillery-men who were generally foreigners. Though Akbar was personally interested in the improvement of the last two types of weapons, as Abul Fazl tells us, the artillery section of the Mughal army was never developed to the extent it might have been. Likewise, the Mughals never possessed a strong navy, even to protect their own commerce from the attacks of pirates who infested the seas very close to the shores of India, although there was considerable ship-building in the Empire. They were contented with river-traffic and maintained only a few large vessels for carrying pilgrims to Mecca and such foreign trade as they were directly interested in. From the point of view of defence, India under the Mughals was completely at the mercy of the European adventurers, both on account of their naval superiority and command of fire-arms.

5. Fiscal Administration

Finance is the life-blood of a State; without its proper management no government is possible. It is, however, possible for a government to prosper at the expense of the people. Public finance which should be adequate for the administration, and not burdensome to the people is the

aim of modern democratic States. In earlier times the interests of the rulers dominated those of their subjects all over the world. Under the Sultans of Delhi, both on account of their foreign character and their religious policy, Hindus were squeezed more than Muslims. Where the rulers levied their taxes methodically, like Ala-ud-din Khalji, few escaped fleecing. Land-revenue, which was the sheet-anchor of the State's income, amounted to nearly half the agricultural produce. It was generally farmed out to military governors, *jagirdars*, or other middlemen, who naturally collected more than they paid into the State exchequer. Consequently, both government and people suffered. A benevolent Sultan like Firuz Tughlaq, no doubt, tried to relieve the burden of the people to some extent, but the entire system was unscientific and arbitrary. The very fact that Firuz abolished about twenty-six heads of taxation, and levied only *khiraj*, *zakat*, *kham*s and the *jiziya*, which alone were considered to be in strict conformity with the *Shariat*, indicated the burden ordinarily borne by the helpless subjects. Though the State dues were preferably collected in cash, Sikandar Lodi revived the ancient practice of receiving payment in kind. This made for greater corruption as the produce was perishable as well as incapable of exact measurement. Except under Firuz Shah and a few others like him, much of the revenue was spent by the rulers on their own luxuries or military aggrandisement. With the advent of Sher Shah there was a distinct change for the better.

As in all other matters of administration, so also in finance, Sher Shah tried to bring order out of chaos. In this, more than anything else, he was the great forerunner of Akbar. Abbas Khan Sarwani, author of the *Tarikh-i-Shershahi*, succinctly describes Sher Shah's arrangements as follows:

There was in every *parganah*, one *amir*, one god-fearing *siqdar*, one treasurer, one *karkum* to write Hindi, and one to write Persian; and he ordered his governors to measure the land every harvest, to collect the revenue according to the measurement, and in proportion to the produce, giving one share to the cultivator, and half share to the *muqaddam*; and fixing the assessment with regard to the kind of grain, in order that the *muqaddams* and the *chowdharies* and *amils* should not oppress the cultivators who are the support of the prosperity of the kingdom.

"Be lenient at the time of assessment, but show no mercy at the time of collection" was the principle by which Sher Shah imparted humanity, elasticity as well as efficiency to

the system. The most important safeguard he provided for the State which collected the revenue and the *rayat* who paid it, was by means of the *kabuliyat* and *patta*. "A *kabuliyat* or agreement, containing a short account of the *rayat*'s holding and the amount to be paid by him to the government, was taken by the *amin* (or *amil*) from every individual *rayat*, duly signed and attested; and he gave in return a *patta* or title-deed to the *rayat* with a record of the State demand." The claim of the State ranged between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the produce. It was preferably collected in cash.

Akbar, with the assistance of able *Divans* like Muzaffar Khan and Todar Mall, vastly improved upon this legacy from Sher Shah. In the confusion which followed the death of Sher Shah, his system had been largely upset. "On the one hand, the husbandmen complained of extensive exactions, and on the other, the holders of assigned lands were aggrieved on account of the revenue balances." So, according to Abul Fazl, Akbar devised a fixed settlement for ten years, as a result of which "the people were made more contented and their gratitude was abundantly manifested." Between 1570 and 1580, land surveys were effected under which, owing to the difficulties caused by the diversity and fluctuations of prices, averages were made the basis of a revised and just assessment. In the year 1575-6, an experiment was made with dividing the Empire, excluding Bihar, Bengal and Gujarat, into 182 equal fiscal districts, each yielding a revenue of one *crore* of *dams* (Rs. 2,50,000). But that having failed, the division of the Empire into its more natural *subahs* was accepted, in 1579-80, as the basis of the revenue settlement. With the exception of Bengal, where the *Nasaq* or arbitrary group assessment prevailed, and Sind, Kabul and Kashmir, where the *Ghallabaksh* or crop-sharing practice was continued, the '*Zabti* or *Rayatwari* system was established over the rest of the Empire.* It was based on the experience gained from Todar Mall's first experiments in Gujarat. In 1644, in the reign of Shah Jahan, when Aurangzeb was viceroy of the Deccan, the system was also extended to the Deccan with the assistance of Murshid Quli Khan.

The merit of the new settlement lay in its scientific and just assessment based on very careful, systematic and accurate surveys. For this purpose, a stiff pole was substituted for the loose rope used in the time of Sher Shah, for measuring lands, and the units of measurement were also defined and fixed. Lands were classified into four sorts:

* According to Moreland, 138 out of the 199 subdivisions had the Regulation system. Berar and Khandesh followed the *Nasaq*.

(1) *Polaj* or 'land' cultivated throughout the year by a rotation of crops; (2) *Parauti* or land left fallow for some time during the year for recuperation; (3) *Chachar* or land lying fallow for 3 or 4 years at a stretch; and (4) *Banjar* or land remaining uncultivated for five years or more. Taxes were levied only on lands actually under cultivation, and not on land merely occupied. "Of the first two kinds of land", states the *Ain-i-Akbari*, "there are three classes: good, middling and bad. They add together the produce of each sort; and a third of this represents the medium produce, one-third part of which is exacted as the royal dues. The revenue levied by Sher Khan, which at the present day is represented in all provinces as the lowest rate of assessment, generally obtained; and for the convenience of the cultivators and the soldiery, the value was taken in ready money." We also further learn from Abul Fazl that, "When, either from excessive rain or through an inundation, the land falls out of cultivation, the husbandmen are, at first, in considerable distress. In the first year, therefore, but two-fifths of the produce is taken; in the second, three-fifths, and in the third, the ordinary revenue. According to differences in situation, the revenue is paid either in money or in kind."

Akbar's instructions to his revenue officers are worthy of special notice. "Encourage the *rayats* to extend their cultivation", he declared, "and let them carry on agriculture with all their heart. Do not screw everything out of them: remember the *rayats* are permanent." They were asked to "realise nothing in excess of the regulations." Before the season of cultivation, the *amin* was to "take from the *qanungoes* the preceding ten years' papers of the revenue assessment and area of the villages, ride to the villages in company with the *kroris*, *chowdharies*, *qanungoes* and *zamindars*, enquire into the condition of the villages, as regards their (cultivable) area and the actual number of ploughs, compare the area given in the papers of the *qanungo* with the real area, and if the two do not agree, call upon the *qanungo* to explain the difference to the headman (in case of shortage)... Then enquire whether the existing ploughs are sufficient for the cultivators of the village. If not, grant *taqavi* (agricultural loans)... for the purchase of oxen and seed, taking bonds from the headmen for the recovery of the loan with the first instalment of the next year's revenue, and indemnity-bonds from the *kroris* that they would realise the loan with the first instalment of the next year." "In short", writes V. A. Smith, "the system was an admirable one. The principles were sound,

and the practical instructions to officials all that could be desired."

Although in theory all lands belonged to the sovereign, as a matter of fact, they were divided into three categories: *Khalisa*, *Jagir* and *Aima* or *Sayurghal*. The first alone constituted the private property of the Emperors; the second were practically made over to the *jagirdars* and *mansabdars* who administered them in their own interest; and the last were rent-free grants to scholars and pious men generally. Akbar followed the policy of converting the latter two classes of transferred property into *Khalisa* as far as possible. The *aima* lands particularly were appropriated in all cases of corruption, after a thorough scrutiny of the merits of each holder. It was discovered that in several cases the assignees were idlers or pretenders who had come by such grants on some pretext or other. This created a stir and raised organised opposition on the part of vested interests, but Akbar dealt with the agitation with a firm hand.

The Mughal government had several other sources of income besides land-revenue. For instance, customs, tells, monopolies such as salt and mints, presents (*peshkash*), indemnities and fines, brought in fairly large amounts. The *jiziya* and pilgrim-taxes, when they were revived by Aurangzeb, made an important addition to the income of the State. There were a number of forbidden cesses (*abwabs*) which appear to have been collected by local officers, though they were repeatedly 'abolished' whenever a new ruler came to the throne. This is indicative of a certain laxity in the fiscal administration, despite the good intentions of the Emperors. In the time of Aurangzeb, there was not only a restoration of the *jiziya*, but also a double standard of taxation: one for Muslims and another for Hindus. Nonetheless, he too, according to the chroniclers, remitted eighty different taxes or cesses: "Besides these, the tithe on corn, which lawfully brought in twenty-five lakhs of rupees, was remitted to alleviate the heavy cost of grain." On the whole, so far as peasants were concerned, Aurangzeb appears to have continued the wise policy of Akbar. He exercised the same care for the efficiency of revenue officers, and the same kindness towards cultivators, as his regulations show. For example he enjoined upon the revenue collectors: "Under no name or custom should you take a *dam* or *dirham* above the fixed amount and rate. By no person should the rayats be oppressed or molested in any way. If you find that the peasants are unable to procure the implements of tillage, advance to them money from the State, in the form of

a *taqavi*, after taking security... In the case of unforeseen calamities overtaking the cultivators, so that the *rayat* has not time enough left for a second crop to be raised before the beginning of the next year, consider the revenue as remitted." Finally, he laid down the general rule: "Fix the revenue at such an amount that the *rayats* may not be ruined by the payment of it; and for no reason exceed half the crop, even though the land may be capable of paying more."

The above information is mainly derived from two *firman*s issued by Aurangzeb in the years 1665-6 and 1668-9. They were intended to regulate the collection of revenue, not merely in accordance with the conventions set up by Akbar, but also in conformity with the strict injunctions of Islam. Moreland has expressed the opinion that the Regulation system of Akbar had by now considerably lapsed or weakened, and that the group assessment had generally taken its place. These *firman*s, according to him, were the forerunners of the revenue and tenancy legislation of the British period. It is obvious that under Aurangzeb, as under the early Sultans, the burden on the peasants was increased to nearly one half of the produce.

The total extent of territory surveyed in 1594 was 12.70 *crores* of *bighas*; and that in 1720 was 31.16 *crores*. According to Babur's Memoirs, the land-revenue in his time amounted to 2 *crores* and 60 *lakhs*. In the time of Akbar it was 13.21 *crores* in 1594. In 1605, it had risen to 17.45 *crores*. Under Jahangir, in 1628, it still stood at 17.50; but rose to 21.15 under Shah Jahan, in 1648. Aurangzeb's revenue totalled 26.35 *crores* in 1661, but fell to 23.31 *crores* in 1665 and 20 *crores* in 1695. In the last year of his reign, 1707, it was 29.77 *crores*. According to the *Maasir-ul-Umara*, an early 18th century work, under Akbar the rapidly increasing Imperial expenditure was more than covered by the growth of the Empire and reserves in cash were accumulated. Owing to the neglect of the administration by Jahangir, income from the *Khalisa* fell to 50 *lakhs* of rupees, while the expenditure was 150 *lakhs*. Consequently, the accumulated reserves were drawn upon to meet the deficit. Shah Jahan, on his accession, put the finances on a sound basis: he reserved tracts calculated to yield 150 *lakhs* as income, fixed the normal expenditure as 100 *lakhs*, and had thus a large recurring balance to meet the extravagance of his reign. By 1647, by careful administration, he increased the reserve to 300 *lakhs*, and left to his successor a net balance of nearly 400 *lakhs*. Aurangzeb, at first tried to hold the scales even between income and expenditure, but his long and ruinous wars, particularly

in the Deccan, depleted the reserves, which amounted to a bare 10 or 12 crores at the time of his death.

6. Judicial Administration

In the administration of justice the Sultans and Mughal Emperors aimed at standards which are really worthy of high appreciation. Despite the crimes through which some of them rose to power and the dictates of religion which made them discriminate between the "believers" and the "non-believers" in Islam, in the sphere of judicial administration as such they tried to follow and enforce the law without fear or favour. Though politically, and in matters of religion, Muslims were a privileged class, they could no more evade the law with impunity than the Hindu subjects. In secular matters the law was largely the same for all. One might say that the Canon law was Islamic and Common law was secular. The former was derived from the *Quran* and Islamic traditions; while the latter was promulgated by the ruler, supplemented by judicial precedents. Local traditions or customs were generally respected in the adjudication of cases where there was no infringement of the fundamental laws of Islam. In civil disputes, Hindus were allowed to be governed by their own laws and customs; but in criminal matters they were subject to the same jurisdiction as Muslims. Even here, Hindus could demand trial by ordeal which was not open to Muslims, as that was not in the Islamic tradition. In theory, certainly, and in practice to a considerable degree, the law was no respecter of persons, and the *qazi* as well as the king could be brought under its ordinary jurisdiction.

Under the Sultans the organisation of this department was very much simpler than what it came to be under the Mughal Emperors; it was also more exposed to the arbitrary whims of the Sultans. For instance, though the erratic Muhammad bin Tughlaq allowed a case to be brought up against him in the court of his own *Qazi*, when the verdict went against him, he got rid of the *Qazi* on some other charge. On the other hand, his successor, Firuz Shah, earned a lasting reputation for his humanity by the abolition of several forms of torture. Apart from the *Quran* and the *Shariat*, the Sultan was the sole fountain of justice, and he discharged this function with the help of the *Qazi*, a *Mufti* and a *Muhtasib*. There was a *qazi* in every important city, with or without the other two assistants, and the Chief Justice in the metropolis was known as the *Qazi-ul-qazat*. The *Mufti* was a learned referee well-versed in Islamic jurisprudence; and the *Muhtasib* was the Censor of Public Morals. They were all under the influence, if not

also under the power, of the *Sadr-us-sudur* or head of the Ecclesiastical department.

In the time of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, the Chief Justice came to be called the *Mir-i-Adl*. Sher Shah considered that justice was the highest of religious rites for a ruler, and paid great attention to its administration. He appointed a new set of civil judges called *munsifs* who were not necessarily chosen from among the *ulama* or *faqih* (religious pundits), whereby he considerably emphasised the secular aspect of the judicial office. At their head was the *Munsif-i-munsifan*. He issued *firman*s instructing his judicial and executive officers "on all points of civil administration, whether they were in agreement with religious law or not, so that there was no necessity to refer such matters to the *Qazi* or *Mufti*." These edicts of the kings, later on constituted a body of laws which was called *Qanun-i-Shahi*. The code of the Mughal Emperors, embodied in the regulations of Akbar, the *Institutes* of Jahangir, and the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, made important contributions to this secular source of law.

Akbar's saying that, 'if he were found guilty of an unjust act, he would rise in judgment against himself', did not exaggerate the attitude of the Mughal Emperors towards the highest requirements of justice. By such an attitude they exalted both justice and themselves, though they were the *de facto* and *de jure* creators of the law which obtained within their realm. Jahangir's institution of the "Chain of Justice" was not merely a pompous show as some critics have tried to make out. If Akbar forbade the faying of persons alive, Jahangir, too, interdicted the cutting of noses and ears by way of punishment, though in a fit of temper he had ordered the eyes of his own rebellious son, Khusru, to be put out. Shah Jahan has been maligned by V. A. Smith who says that his justice "was merely the savage, unfeeling ferocity of the ordinary Asiatic despot, exercised without respect of persons and without the slightest tincture of compassion." In the first place, we have to remember that law is no respecter of persons, and justice consists in not discriminating between one individual and another. Secondly, Shah Jahan has been described by Tavernier, a contemporary European eye-witness, as reigning "not so much as a king over his subjects, but rather as a father over his family and children." The way in which justice was rendered even to foreigners in India during the time of Shah Jahan may be illustrated by an example recorded by Manucci: When Bellamont, Charles II's representative in India, died, "two English imposters, pretending to be Imperial officers, wanted to appropriate to themselves

all the effects and belongings of that stranger. When Shah Jahan came to know of this, he ordered all the property to be restored to the rightful assignee of the dead envoy, with the exception of an Arab horse which he kept for himself, *giving an order to the said assignee (John Young) one thousand pataca (Rs. 2,000), the price at which it had been valued. He took nothing else but the latter which was destined for him.*" Indeed, Rai Bhar Mall, a contemporary Hindu chronicler, records: "In short, it was owing to the great solicitude evinced by the King toward the promotion of the national weal and the general tranquillity, that the people were restrained from committing offences against one another and breaking the public peace."

We have already referred to Aurangzeb's compilation of the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*. It was prepared, as we learn from the *Mirat-i-Alam*, at great expense, under the editorship of Sheikh Nizami, a very learned man assisted by a staff of other scholars, in order to "afford to all an easy and available means of ascertaining the proper and authoritative interpretation of the law." According to Khafi Khan, "of all the sovereigns of the house of Timur, nay, of all the sovereigns of Delhi, no one since Sikandar Lodi has ever been apparently so distinguished for devotion, austerity and justice as Aurangzeb." A *firman* issued by this Emperor in 1772, to the *Divan* of Gujarat contained instructions on the treatment of criminals, which illustrated his high regard for justice. Except in the case of hardened criminals, he advised imprisonment in preference to more drastic punishment and gave the offender a chance to repent. "When theft is rife in the town and a thief is captured", he declared, "do not, even after proof, behead him, nor impale him, as it may be his first offence." The following extract speaks for itself:

When a man is brought to the *chabutra* of the *Kotwal* under arrest... the *Kotwal* should personally investigate the charges against him. If he is found innocent, release him immediately. If anybody has a suit against him, ask the former to resort to a court... If the *Qazi* sends a man for detention, take the *Qazi's* signed order for your authority and keep the man in prison. If the *Qazi* fixes a date for his trial, send the prisoner to the *Adalat* on that date; otherwise, send him there every day, so that his case may be quickly decided.

There is enough evidence to show that the Mughal Emperors were very cautious to prevent injustice being done to the accused and to be kind and considerate to those who were condemned even after regular processes of the law. Particularly in the execution of those who were awarded

capital punishment, the instructions were not to be hasty in carrying out the sentence lest there should be some mistake. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, life is a gift from God and there is hope for one so long "as the thread of life is not cut off." Speaking of Akbar, a contemporary Jesuit writer observed: "Towards his fellowmen he was kind and forbearing, averse from taking life, and quick to show mercy. Hence it was that he decreed that, if he condemned anyone to death, the sentence was not to be carried into effect until the receipt of his third order. He was always glad to pardon an offender, if just grounds for doing so could be shown."

The Emperor was the source and centre of the whole judicial system. We have remarked above that the powers of the *Sadr-us-sudur*, who used to be the head of the judicial organisation under the Sultans, were considerably reduced under Akbar. Some writers have opined that that post was latterly altogether abolished. This is not correct, as the names of all those who filled the office are on record. The judicial authority of the *Sadr-us-sudur* was transferred to the *Qazi-ul-quzat* who now became the Chief Justice. He was assisted, as already stated, by other officers like the *Mufti* and the *Muhtabsib*. His appointment was made on merits directly by the Emperor. There were under him several types of subordinate *qazis*, in the towns and *parganahs*. Their jurisdiction in secular matters was shared by the *mir 'adl* who administered only Common law, Canon law being the monopoly of the *qazis*. The denial by some scholars of the existence of a hierarchy of upper and lower courts of justice, with the right of appeal, is baseless, though the relations between them were not clearly defined. The following citation from Rai Bhar Mall, from whom we have quoted before, is sufficient testimony to the contrary:

If offenders were discovered, the local authorities used generally to try them on the spot (where the offence had been committed) according to the law, and in concurrence with the law officers; and if any individual, aggrieved at the decision passed on his case, appealed to the governor or *divan*, or to the *qazi* of the *subah*, the matter was reviewed and judgment was awarded with great care and discrimination, lest it should be mentioned in the presence of the King that justice had not been done. If the parties were not satisfied even with these decisions, they appealed to the Chief *Divan* or to the Chief *Qazi* on matters of law. These officers instituted further inquiries; with all this care, what cases except those relating

to blood and religion could become subjects of reference to His Majesty?

According to Abul Fazl, Akbar "opens the gates of justice and holds an open court. In the investigation into the cases of the oppressed, he places no reliance on (mere) testimony or on oaths, which are the resources of the crafty, but draws his conclusions from the contradictions in the narratives, the physiognomy, and from sublime researches and noble conjectures." De Laet states: "Once a week (on Tuesday) Jahangir takes his seat on the tribunal and hears patiently all causes that are brought before him, both civil and criminal, and pronounces a judgment on each, which is final." We also learn from Abdul Hamid Lahori that Shah Jahan did likewise every Wednesday: "The officers of justice presented the seekers of justice, one by one, the King listened to them attentively, cross-examined them politely, and passed judgment in accordance with the *fatwah* of the *ulama* present there." Ovington records, on the testimony of the English merchants of Bombay and Surat, that Aurangzeb "determines with exact justice and equity: for there is no pleading of privilege or peerage before the Emperor, but the meanest man is as soon heard by Aurangzeb as the chief Omrah, which makes the Omrahs very circumspect of their actions and punctual in their payments." The author of the *Mirat-i-Alam* (Bakhtawar Khan) writes: "He appears two or three times every day in his Court of Audience with a pleasing countenance and mild look, to dispense justice to complainants who come in numbers without hindrance, and as he listens to them with great attention, they make their representations without any fear or hesitation, and obtain redress from his impartiality." Bernier, who was not in general favourably disposed towards the Mughal Emperors, nonetheless remarked: "Barbarous as we are apt to consider the sovereigns of Asia, they are not always unmindful of the justice that is due to their subjects." He also considered that "there are some advantages peculiar to despotic governments: they have fewer lawyers, and fewer law-suits, and those few are more speedily decided."

7. Local Administration

We have noted already that, before the time of the Mughals, although the Central Government was more despotic, it was powerless to control the entire administration in the provinces and districts effectively. The Mughal Emperors brought into existence a well co-ordinated system of government in which all parts of the Empire worked more coherently. Of course, there were periods of trouble,

and not all the divisions were equally well administered; but there was sufficient uniformity and control during the better days of the Empire, to enable us to describe the pattern as a whole as a fairly well-ordered system. The number of provinces varied from 12 in the time of Akbar, to begin with, to 20 under Aurangzeb. Internally they comprised *khalisa*, *jagir* and *suyurghal* lands besides the territories of the semi-independent tributaries. For administrative purposes, each province or *subah*, was divided into *sarkars* or commissioners' divisions, and *parganahs* or districts. The last had under them minor subdivisions called *mahals*, *chaklas* and *thanas*. The villages were allowed to manage their own internal affairs in the ancient manner.

At the head of the provincial administration was the *Sipah-salar* or *Subahdar*, officially known as the *Nazim*. He was appointed by the Emperor directly and was entirely responsible to him in all matters connected with the province. But, in order to counteract the evils of feudal concentration of power in the hands of such local potentates, a provincial *Divan* with all but co-equal authority was also appointed from the Centre. He was next only in dignity and status to the *Subahdar*, but independent of his colleague for all practical purposes. Being solely responsible for the financial administration, involving details of income as well as expenditure, his powers were those of a Comptroller-General of civil as well as military administration. His function was to assist, no less than to check, all the departments of the provincial government. But for this dyarchical arrangement, the provincial government was an exact replica of the central organisation. Short of exercising the prerogatives of the sovereign Emperor (like the power of life and death over every subject, and the supreme privilege of *Jharoka-darshan*) and ruling in his own right, the *Subahdar* played the part of his Imperial master within his charge. The provincial *Divan* answered to the central dignitary of the same name, to whom he was also answerable officially. Similarly, there were provincial *bakhshis*, *sadrs* and *qazis* subject to their respective departmental heads at the Centre. In addition to these, the most important among the local subordinate officers were the *faujdar*, *muqaddam* and *thanadar*, who were charged with the maintenance of order; and the *qanungo*, *patwari* and *bitikchi*, who looked after local accounts and other records of use to the government. But by far the most onerous duties were concentrated in the *Kotwal* whose character and functions were, therefore, of key-importance. The

Ain-i-Akbari has described them as under:

Through his night patrolling and watchfulness the citizens should enjoy the repose of security, and the evil-disposed lie in the slough of non-existence. He should keep a register of houses, and frequent roads, and engage the citizens in a pledge of reciprocal assistance, and bind them to a common participation of weal and woe. He should form a quarter by the union of a certain number of habitations, and name one of his intelligence subordinates for its superintendence, and receive a daily report under his seal, of those who enter or leave it, and of whatever events therein occur. And he should appoint as a spy one among the obscure residents with whom the others should have no acquaintance, and keeping their reports in writing, employ a heedful scrutiny. He should minutely observe the income and expenditure of the various classes of men, and by a refined address make his vigilance reflect honour on his administration. Of every guild of artificers he should name one as a guild-master, and another as a broker, by whose intelligence the business of purchase and sale should be conducted. From these he should require frequent reports. When the night is a little advanced he should prohibit people from entering or leaving the city. He should set the idle to some handicraft. He should discover thieves and the goods they have stolen, or be responsible for the loss. . . . He should so direct that no one shall demand a tax or cess save on arms, elephants, camels, cattle, sheep, goats and merchandise. . . . He should suffer no alteration in the value of the gold and silver coin of the realm, and its diminution by wear in circulation he shall recover to the value of the deficiency. He should use his discretion in the reduction of prices, and not allow purchases to be made outside the city. The rich shall not take beyond what is necessary for their consumption. He shall examine the weights and make the *ser* not more or less than 30 *dams*. In the *gaz*, he should permit neither decrease nor increase, and restrain the people from the making, dispensing, buying or selling of wine; but refrain from invading the privacy of domestic life. Of the property of a deceased or missing person, who may have no heir, he shall make an inventory and keep it in his care. He should reserve separate wells and ferries for men and women. He should appoint persons of respectable character to supply the public water-courses; and prohibit women from riding horses. He should direct that no ox or buffalo or horse or camel be slaughtered; and forbid the restriction of personal liberty and the selling of

slaves. He should not suffer a woman to be hurt against her inclination, nor a criminal deserving of death to be impaled, nor any one, to be circumcised under the age of twelve... etc.

Another important official was the news-reporter. In fact there were many in this department, scattered all over the Empire. They constituted the detectives and newspapermen rolled into one. They were under the supervision and orders of the *Darogha-i-dakchowki*. If the governor of the province or any other high official ill-treated the news-reporters for reporting against them, the *Darogha* could get them punished for the offence. Very drastic action was taken against defaulting reporters. These *vagia navises*, as they were called, were the eyes and ears of the government. The Emperors kept in touch with what was happening from day to day in various parts of the Empire through these informers, as well as by their personal tours which were not infrequent. But the over-all officer on whom they had to depend in the provinces was the *Nazim* or *Subahdar*. Besides commanding the local troops and seeing to their equipment and discipline, he nominated most of the other officers in the province. As the man on the spot, he had instructions to improve agriculture, to maintain the water-courses and reservoirs, as well as the roads and *sarais* in good condition. "Every month he shall submit a statement of the condition of the people, of the *jagirdars* and neighbouring residents; the submission of the rebellious; the market-places; the current rents of the tenements; the state of the destitute poor, and of the artificers; and all contingencies" ran the instrument of instructions.

NOTE: ON THE SUBAHS

"His Majesty," writes Abul Fazl, "apportioned the Empire into 12 divisions, to each of which he gave the name of *Subah*, and distinguished them by the appellation of the tract of the country or its capital city. These were Ilahabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malwa; and when Berar, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar were conquered, their number was fixed at 15." When Kashmir and Qandahar were conquered they were annexed to Kabul; Sind or Thatta was included in Multan; and Orissa in Bengal. The only conquest of Jahangir was Kangra; that district was probably included in the *subah* of Lahore. Shah Jahan added the whole of the Nizamshahi territory excepting Balaghat; Berar and a portion of Telingana were annexed between 1633-36. These three together with Khandesh, were constituted into the *subah* of the Deccan. But they did not increase the total

number of *subahs*, because there was only a change in nomenclature: Deccan taking the place of Ahmadnagar. These 15 *subahs* were increased to 18 under Shah Jahan by the separation of Thatta, Kashmir and Orissa into independent provinces. The addition of Golkonda and Bijapur, under Aurangzeb, raised their number to 26.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROGRESS

1. *Wealth and Welfare.* 2. *Production and Patronage.* 3. *Communications and Commerce.* 4. *Standard of Living.* 5. *Art and Architecture.* 6. *Literature.* 7. *Criticism.*

1. *Wealth and Welfare*

THE most valuable contribution to the progress of India made by the Mughals was perhaps their administrative organisation. It was not without serious defects, which we shall examine in due course, but nothing like it existed at the moment they conquered this country. By their political genius and patient endeavours, the Mughal Emperors not only created order out of the medieval chaos, but also established a stable government which survived for at least two centuries. During this long period it sustained many shocks without succumbing to any of them. This central fact is often overlooked by those who concentrate only on the shortcomings of the Mughal administrative system. That system did not cover the whole of India, but it was extensive and substantial enough to govern materially the conditions obtaining in this sub-continent during the period of its strength. In this chapter we shall make a brief survey of the progress which was rendered possible by the "Mughal peace".

The potential wealth of India has always been great, but it has rarely been fully exploited. Before the establishment of the Mughal Empire, lack of security to life, limb and property had engendered the habit of hoarding. This was not completely cured because, even under the Mughals, the sense of security was not perfect. Fear of exploitation by the rulers also discouraged open indulgence in the enjoyment of wealth among large sections of the people. But shyness to display wealth did not indicate the absence of wealth. Judging from such evidence as we are able to obtain, the Mughals left India very much richer than they found her when they first came. Unlike their British successors, they did not remove any appreciable part of the wealth they helped produce, outside the borders of this country. The only exceptions to this were the rich gifts which Babur lavishly distributed among his co-religionists in order to advertise his epoch-making victory at Panipat, and the not invaluable offerings, sent by most of the Emperors and their *amirs*, to holy places like Mecca outside India. But these were not considerable enough to affect

our prosperity adversely; on the other hand, they served to advertise the wealth of India which stimulated external contacts and foreign trade.

It will be recalled that one of the chief attractions of India for Babur was that there were in this country "large quantities of gold and silver coined and uncoined". Though he left Humayun an all but empty treasury, his legacy to his successors proved an El Dorado 'rich beyond the dreams of avarice'. Though Akbar could conquer only half of this country, the treasures he left at his death appear to have amounted to not less than £ 240 millions sterling, according to Hoyland and Banerjee. Mendelso computed Shah Jahan's stores at Rs. 3,000 millions! The figures for the land-revenue of the Empire, cited in the previous chapter, are another index of the annual income of the Mughal Emperors: in the time of Babur it was hardly 3 crores; under Akbar it had risen to nearly 18 crores; and to 21 crores under Shah Jahan. In 1707 it was very near 30 crores of rupees. It is to be remembered that land-revenue was only one, though the most substantial, source of income. There were, besides, the customs-duties at the ports, tolls on various roads and ferries, monopolies like salt, opium and indigo, gifts, fines and escheats—not to speak of the *jiziya* when it was collected. The enormous loot that Shivaji was able to gather from Surat alone gives us a clue to the wealth accumulated in the cities of the Mughal Empire. According to Thevenot, the Maratha carried away "in jewels, gold and silver, to the value of above thirty French millions". In spite of this, wealth accumulated so fast that, during his second raid, Shivaji could still carry away another 132 lakhs worth of plunder. Though Shah Jahan squandered 120 millions of rupees in his futile efforts to recover Kandahar, and also expended fabulous sums on buildings and the grandeur of his Court and capital, he could still leave behind him a net balance of 400 lakhs to his successor. To consider only a few of the vast building schemes and other expensive items of the Mughal Emperors: we may imagine what it must have cost to create new cities like Fatehpur Sikri and Shahjahanabad. According to the *Shahjahan-nama*, the fort in the latter place alone cost 60 lakhs of rupees. According to the *Diwan-i-Afridi*, 9 crores and 17 lakhs of rupees were spent on the Taj Mahal. On one occasion Shah Jahan sent to Mecca and Medina amber candle-sticks and other gifts valued at 2,50,000 rupees. The celebrated Peacock throne was constructed at a cost of 100 lakhs of rupees. The following extract from the *Lubb-ut Tawarikh* may very well conclude this brief estimate of the wealth of the Mughal Emperors:

Notwithstanding the comparative increase in the expenses of the State during this reign (i.e. of Shah Jahan), gratuities for the erection of public edifices and other works in progress, and for the paid military service and establishments, such as those maintained in Balkh, Badakshan and Kandahar, amounted, at one disbursement only, to fourteen *crores* of rupees, and the advances made on account of edifices only were two *crores* and fifty *lakhs* of rupees. From this single instance of expenditure, an idea may be formed as to what the charges must have been under others.

We know that Aurangzeb frittered away the vast accumulated resources of the Empire in his suicidal wars against the Marathas and Rajputs. Nevertheless, thirty-two years after his death, when Nadir Shah invaded Delhi in 1739, he was able to carry away from the Imperial capital 70 *crores* of rupees worth of jewels and other effects; his officers appropriated another 10 *crores*; while his stay in Delhi, short as it was, cost 20 *crores*! Enormous as these figures may appear, they are no more than a mere index to the total wealth of the Mughal Empire. No attempt has yet been made to compute this even approximately. For our purpose, suffice it to observe that these data, scanty and scattered as they are, give us an impression of the production of wealth on a stupendous scale in the days of the Mughals. In their time the potential wealth of India was exploited to a greater extent than was done perhaps at any time before them. But did this make for the welfare of the people and the country as a whole? This is not an easy question to answer in a simple and categorical form. The rest of this chapter will indicate to a certain extent the real position.

2. Production and Patronage

Agriculture and industry are the two means by which wealth is produced for the most part. It is further increased through the processes of trade and commerce, both internal and external. The prosperity of these depends not only upon the exertions of the ordinary people, but also upon the conditions in which they live and the degree of patronage they receive at the hands of those in authority. It cannot be claimed that conditions were ideal from all these points of view in the Mughal Empire; nor can it be said that they were so bad as some writers have tried to show. Reserving detailed criticism to a later section, we may broadly state that the policy of the Mughal Emperors was to encourage production through agriculture, industry and commerce, if only to secure their profits. The attitude

of the Emperors towards the cultivators, who brought into the exchequer of the Empire the largest amount of revenue, has been indicated in the previous chapter. It is best illustrated by the instructions issued by them to the revenue-collectors: "Deal with every husbandman, present his demand, and separately and civilly receive his dues; stipulate that the husbandman brings his rents himself at definite periods, so that the malpractices of low intermediaries may be avoided". Canals were constructed and wells were dug in order to increase the water supply. Remissions and loans were granted to the peasants in difficult times.

Industrial production was both private and State-owned. The handicrafts and cottage industries of India have been well known at all times. They were patronised as well as exploited by the State on the one hand and the nobles and merchants on the other. The love of luxury at the Court, as well as among the nobility, provided a great incentive to workers in this field. Where they were unorganised and poor, the workers received materials as well as maintenance from the *gumasthas* or agents of the rich merchants, both foreign and Indian. This, however, was a source of weakness and helplessness and resulted in their ruthless exploitation. Men of talent were always picked up for employment in the State *karkhanas*. These *karkhdnas* were State-owned and State-managed under the supervision of the *Khan-i-Saman* who was an Imperial officer. They are specimens of large-scale production in this country in Mughal times. Bernier tells us that within the Imperial fortresses "large halls are seen in many places called *karkhanas* or workshops for the artisans. In one hall embroiderers are busily employed, superintended by a master; in another you see goldsmiths; in a third, painters; in a fourth, varnishers in laquer-work; in a fifth, joiners, turners, tailors, shoe-makers; in a sixth, manufacturers of silk, brocade, and those fine muslins of which are made turbans, girdles with golden flowers, and (fine) drawers worn by females, beautifully embroidered with needle-work." From Abul Fazl we learn: "His Majesty pays much attention to various stuffs... skilful masters and workmen have settled in this country, to teach people an improved system of manufacture. The Imperial workshops in the towns of Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur, Ahmadabad-Gujarat turn out many masterpieces of workmanship... On account of the care bestowed upon them, the intelligent workmen of this country soon improved... The Imperial workshops produce all those stuffs which are made in other countries. A taste for fine material has since become general, and the drapery used at feasts surpasses every description".

The patronage of the Emperors was neither formal nor casual. The department of the *Mir-i-Saman* was conducted with the greatest care and regularity. It submitted a financial statement together with a full account of the articles produced and the materials used and required, twice every year. These were finally laid before the Emperor for his approval which was accorded in the form of a *firman* bearing the Imperial seal. Not content with merely scrutinising the details of the written statements, the Emperor required periodical exhibition of the articles actually manufactured in the *karkhanas*. Often the Emperor would ask for the artisan who produced an article that attracted his special attention. This resulted in the skilled workmen being specially rewarded. Jahangir had a flair for copying anything that he saw fabricated in other countries, from a painting to a dagger blade or handle. When Shah Jahan sent a gift of Rs. 5,00,000 to Mecca, he took care not to do it in cash: he sent the products of his own *karkhanas* to be sold in Hejaz and the amount realised therefrom was given away in charity at the holy place. This served the double interests of industry as well as piety!

Though some of the better class of nobles might have patronised the workmen, following in the footsteps of the Emperor, others did not scruple to exploit them as Bernier observed: "The rich will have every article at a cheap rate. When a *umara* (*amir*) or *mansabdar* requires the services of an artisan, he sends to the bazar for him, employing force, if necessary, to make the poor man work; and after the task is finished, the unfeeling lord pays, not according to the value of the labour, but agreeably to his own standard of fair remuneration; the artisan having reason to congratulate himself if the *kora* (lash) has not been given in part payment... The artists, therefore, who arrive at any eminence in their art are those only who are in the service of the king, or of some powerful *umara* (*amir*), and who work exclusively for their patron". With proper encouragement the Indian craftsmen could emulate the best products of any land.

3. Communications and Commerce

India was one of the great countries of the world in ancient times. During the age of the Mauryas and the Guptas, for instance, our missionaries and merchants crossed the seas and continents and carried our culture and civilisation to remote corners of the then known world. Then there was a set-back during the dark ages which preceded the advent of the Mughals who again put India on the map of the world. Immediately before the Mughals

imparted political unity to our sub-continent, even the internal communications had been largely interrupted. The Mughals restored the old communications or created new ones and quickened internal trade as well as external commerce.

We are able to gather much valuable information about the economic life of the country in Mughal times from several contemporary works such as the *Ain-i-Akbari* compiled by Akbar's great minister Abul Fazl, the *Khulasat-ut-awarikh* of Subhan (Sajan?) Rai (A.D. 1695), and the *Chahar Gulshan* of Rai Chatar Man Kayath (A.D. 1759). Sir Jadunath Sarkar regards the data contained in the last named work to date from A.D. 1720. These may be supplemented by the evidence contained in the accounts of foreign travellers, mostly Europeans, who flocked to this country in large numbers during this period for a variety of purposes: either as ambassadors like Sir Thomas Roe and Bernier, or as missionaries like the Jesuit Fathers, or as men of business like Tavernier, or as mere adventurers like Manucci. From all these, and other (official) sources, like the *Dastur-al Amal*, we are able to gather much information about the production and distribution of wealth in Mughal times: the location of centres of industries, the nature of the means of communication—by road, river and sea—and the varieties of products that were exchanged between the different parts of the country on the one hand, and India and foreign countries on the other.

Although as many as twenty-four arterial roads are mentioned and described in all their stages in the contemporary works cited above—connecting the capitals of the Empire like Delhi, Agra and Lahore, with the principal cities and towns in the provinces or *subahs*, and the important sea-ports—the rivers and canals were generally preferred for inland communication. The roads were measured and their distances or stages marked. In many cases they were lined with avenues of trees for shade; and *serais* or rest-houses were constructed for the convenience and safety of travellers. They also served as *dak-ckowkies* or post-offices-cum-police outposts. Yet, the carriers being primitive—caravans of pack-horses or bullocks, camels and elephants, and carts—waterways provided a more convenient and quicker means of transport than roads. Nevertheless, during certain seasons and along certain routes, road caravans were the only conveyance available, and they assumed huge proportions. For instance, Moreland has cited one journey from Lahore to Kandahar, in 1615, which comprised a caravan of camels 12,000 to 14,000 in number.

Even bigger caravans comprising as many as 20,000 pack-animals traversed the country from end to end. According to Peter Mundy (1628-34) each of the oxen carried a load of about four maunds. The *Banjaras* were professional carriers who owned the animals and carts they used. According to contemporary European observers, Hughes and John Marshall, the journey from Patna to Agra took 30 to 35 days, and it cost Rs. 153 (+Rs. 8 reward for punctuality!) to convey 81 maunds; Surat to Agra, *via* Burhanpur, about 550 miles, took nearly 40 days. The cart-hire over this distance was no more than Rs. 40-45. According to Tavernier, this was about the average for the whole of India.

Peter Mundy speaks of a regular boat-traffic—each vessel carrying 300-400 tons—between Agra and Bengal. On the way they touched at places like Etawa, Allahabad, Patna, etc., up to Dacca. Fitch went from Agra to Satgaon in Bengal with a fleet of 180 boats carrying salt, opium, *hing* (asafoetida), lead, carpets, etc. "These boats", he writes, "have 24 to 26 oars to row them; they be of great burthen, but have no coverture". The flat-bottomed *patel-las* on the Ganges carried freight from 4,000 to 6,000 Bengal maunds. Indian ships were noted for their size as well as strength. As early as in 1420, Nicolo Conti observed: "The natives of India built some ships larger than ours, capable of containing 2,000 butts, and with five sails and as many masts. The lower part is constructed with triple planks, in order to withstand the force of the tempests to which they are much exposed. But some ships are so built in compartments that, should one part be shattered, the other portion remaining entire, may accomplish the voyage". There were large ship-building yards all along the coast, particularly in Sind, Cambay, Surat, Cochin, Masulipatam, and Bengal. Some of the bigger ones, according to Conti, cost 15,000 gold pieces. Their tonnage varied from under 100 to 1500. Sir Henry Middleton saw at Surat, in 1612, an Indian-built vessel 153 feet long, 42 feet broad, and 31 feet deep, carrying a burthen of 1500 tons. According to Terry (1616), one of these ships plying between Surat and Mocha carried on board 1700 passengers. In 1657 Christopher Hotton observed at Masulipatam "20 sail of ships of burthen belonging to the native inhabitants here constantly employed on voyages to Arrakan, Pegu, Tenassery, Queda, Malacca... Moca, Persia, and the Maldiv Islands. Several ships trade yearly to Arrakan, Tenassery and Ceylon to purchase elephants for the King of Golkonda and his nobility. They bring in some of his ships from 14 to 25 of these vast creatures. They must of necessity be of very considerable burthens and built exceedingly strong."

Dr. Bal Krishna calculated that the total annual tonnage, from various Indian ports, during this period was about 3,45,000, out of which 85,000 tons were carried between India and the outside world, the rest being coastal. But the foreign trade increased with the lapse of years and the growing commercial rivalry between the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English. For instance, between 1612 and 1672 the average annual trade of the English East India Company from the whole of India did not exceed £100,000 or Rs. 8,00,000; but by the year 1681 it rose to £230,000 for Bengal alone.

The principal articles of export from the Mughal Empire to Europe, Africa, and Asian countries like China and the Archipelago, were opium, indigo, saltpetre, and cotton fabrics and precious stones like diamonds. India got in return glass, mirrors, trinkets like beads, and most of all gold and silver. In ancient times Pliny, the Roman historian, complained of the drain of Roman gold on account of the Eastern trade in spices and silks, etc. This continued to be the case down to the days of the Mughals. Pepper, ginger, ghee, and sugar were among the exports to Europe, while we obtained slaves and horses in return. William Hawkins observed: "India is rich in silver (and gold), for all nations bring coin and carry away commodities for the same; and this coin is buried in India and goeth not forth". Terry too stated: "Many silver streams run hither, as all rivers to the sea, and there stay". The description of Bengal given by Bernier is fairly representative of the country in respect of foreign trade:

In regard to valuable commodities of a nature to attract foreign merchants, I am acquainted with no country where so great a variety is found. Besides the sugar... there is in Bengale such quantity of cotton and silks that the kingdom may be called the common storehouse for those two kinds of merchandise, not of Hindoustan or the Empire of the Great Mogol only, but of all the neighbouring kingdoms, and even of Europe. I have been sometimes amazed at the vast quantity of cotton cloths of every sort, fine and coarse, white and coloured, which the Hollanders alone export to different places, especially to Japan and Europe. The English, the Portuguese and the native merchants deal also in these articles to a considerable extent. The same may be said of the silks and the silk stuffs of all sorts. It is not possible to conceive the quantity drawn every year from Bengale for the supply of the whole Mogol Empire, as far as Lahore and Cabol (Kabul), and generally of all those foreign nations to which the cottons are sent. The Dutch have sometimes

seven or eight hundred natives employed in their silk factory at Kassem Bazar, where in like manner the English and other merchants employ a proportionate number.

Bengale is also the principal emporium for saltpetre. It is carried down the Ganges with great facility, and the Dutch and English send large cargoes to many parts of the Indies and to Europe.

Lastly, it is from this fruitful kingdom that the best lac, opium, wax, civet, long pepper and various drugs are obtained; and butter, which may appear to you an inconsiderable article, is in such plenty, that, although it be a bulky article to export, yet it is sent by sea to numberless places.

This vast and precious trade was, however, hampered by two principal dangers: robbers on land and pirates on sea. Travellers frequently complained of the insecurity of the roads. They therefore moved about with the caravans of traders who provided themselves with armed escorts. This naturally added to the cost of transport, and the losses incurred on account of robberies had to be made good by the enhancement of prices. The same thing happened to the sea-trade. Prices of articles sold in Europe are estimated to have cost about five times more than what they cost in India. Pirates belonged to all nations, and the Portuguese and English counted among the most notorious. Shah Jahan had to lead a regular campaign against the pirates of Chittagong, who included a large number of Portuguese among them, and to punish them heavily. European piracy in Indian waters commenced with Vasco da Gama's discovery of India. "It excited no moral reprobation in Christendom," writes Sarkar. In 1635, Cobb, captain of an English ship licensed by Charles I, plundered two Mughal vessels at the mouth of the Red Sea; and in 1638, Sir William Courten, with a similar charter from the King of England, sent out four ships which robbed Indian vessels and tortured their crews." For these misdeeds the East India Company at Surat was obliged to pay an indemnity of Rs. 1,70,000. "Not only were the greater number of pirates of English blood, but pirate captains of other nationalities often sailed under English colours. The native officials, unable to distinguish the rouges from the honest traders, held the East India Co.'s servants responsible for their misdeeds." (Sarkar)

To cover such risks they had recourse to marine insurance. Indian bankers distinguished themselves not less than Indian merchants. The most famous of them in the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan was Virjee Vora of Surat.

He had his agents in all the important cities of India and abroad. The English described him as "the greatest and richest general merchant that inhabiteth this Vast Kingdome". Tavernier, speaking of the Indian *banias* of this period, wrote: "The Jews engaged in money matters in the Turkish Empire are usually considered to be exceptionally able, but they are scarcely fit to be apprenticed to the money-changers of India!" William Finch described them saying: "They are as subtle as the devil whose limbs, I certainly persuade myself, they are." According to Pyrard de Laval: "I have never seen men of wit so fine and polished as are these Indians; they have nothing barbarous or savage about them, as we are apt to suppose".

4. Standard of Living.

In a vast country like India it is difficult to speak of the standard of living in general terms. Even today the conditions are in no way exactly alike in different parts of the country, on the one hand, and among different classes on the other. Moreland and other foreign writers have contrasted the luxurious living of the nobility and the upper classes of society with the poverty and helpless misery of the poor and indigent. Without questioning the truth of the evidence cited by them in support of their thesis, it is permissible to observe that such a contrast in the distribution of wealth—between the 'haves' and the have-nots'—was no special feature of the Mughal Empire. We are yet to realise the Utopia of economic equality, not only in modern India, but all over the world. The disparity in the standards of living between the classes and the masses is yet to be considerably reduced if it cannot be altogether eliminated. We shall cite examples of a few types here, beginning with the Imperial family at the top, followed closely by the courtly nobility, the merchant princes, the 'middle classes' and the masses coming last.

It is not necessary to dwell at length on the obvious grandeur of the Mughal Court, which is better imagined than described. One has only to visit the Mughal palaces and note the extravagance of wealth expended on them—even in their present forsaken condition, after nearly three centuries—to realise the kind of life their royal inmates must have lived in the plenitude of their prosperity. A few excerpts from a European eye-witness' account of the banquet given by Asaf Khan to Jahangir, on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter Mumtaz with Prince Khurram (later Shah Jahan), will provide an authentic glimpse:

The banquet was given in the principal hall of the Guzlhana, in which, besides the fixtures, there were added

on this occasion rich carpets of silk, silver and gold, which covered the floor, serving as ground-tables according to the native custom, as also for seats for the guests; and these coverings were useful, because in the four corners of the hall were other similar tables, each of five steps, and all enriched with Persian coverings of gold and silver, serving for stands and dresses, all covered with different vessels of gold in which the sight had full occupation, distinguishing in some the variety of jewellery used, and in others, instead of it, the very fine and brilliant enamelling varying the material, assimilated the colouring. This superb display was accompanied by various and large perfume-vessels and silver braziers of extraordinary forms, placed in order all round the hall, in which burnt very sweet perfumes composed of amber, civet, and other blended pastiles which in their union delighted the sense of smell.

At the entrance of this beautiful hall the water-works on one side delivered seven streams, whose silver pipes of admirable make and considerable size, were adorned with thin plates of enamel, which through their elevated heads, discharged fine thread of scented waters, which, falling in a large basin of the same material, kept it always half full. Then, discharging by another part what was received, was thus able to be always used for those washings of the feet, which in Mughal manners is one of the most essential parts of ceremonial courtesy. In the middle of this was placed for the occasion a table-cloth of very fine white tissue in which were woven artificial flowers of gold and silver. In the centre of this table were two great and beautiful cushions of cloth-of-gold and satin, on which were others, smaller, of cloth-of-silver and satin. This was all the display of the Imperial table, including a lack of napkins which they do not use.

The last remark about the absence of napkins is, however, contradicted by the same writer further down. Referring to the hand-washing, he continues:

Four beauties bore the instruments of hand-washing... These vessels are of quite superior invention to ours, there being deep in the middle a grating which allows the dirty water to disappear. This vessel being placed before him (the Emperor) another comes with an ewer of the same material and value containing water with which he washed his hands (again) receiving from the last of these ladies the *towel* on which to wipe them.... This banquet was served in rich dishes of gold, borne by eunuchs gallantly attired in the Hindustani style, with trousers of variegated silks and snow-white cloaks, at the

same time displaying the precious urgent with which they were perfumed, and also concealing their abject and dark skins. Of these the four chief ones placed themselves near His Majesty, doing nothing but handing up the course which the others brought to two beautiful girls who were on their knees on the Emperor's side. These bring forward the food alternately, and similar others serve the drink and take away the dishes which are not used. . . . At the end, the banquet having lasted four hours, . . . twelve dancing women, who performed in a manner unsuited to Christian society; after which appeared in the midst three beautiful young ladies, in gay and costly garments, bearing in their hands three large and splendid dishes of gold filled with precious diamonds, pearls, rubies and other valuable gems. . . .

Babur's complaint about the absence of certain amenities of civilised life, such as good habitations, candlesticks, ice and iced water, etc., in the Punjab when he first came, are well known. In an earlier chapter we have cited evidence of his revised impressions of the economic condition of India, which most writers have overlooked. The Mughals certainly did much by way of introducing a very high standard of living, though it could not become general among all classes of people. The royal family and the nobility not only lived in palatial residences and wore rich dresses and jewellery, but also ate very rich food. In addition to the best dishes of rice, ghee and meat richly spiced, they consumed all varieties of fruit. The *Waqiat-i-Jahangiri* refers to the celebrated melons and grapes of Kabul, Badakhshan and Samarkand. In the days of Babur he had felt home-sick when he saw a "wonderful, delicate and toothsome melon with a mottled skin like shagreen"! But now "the sweet pomegranates of Yazd, and the subacid ones of Farrah, pears from Samarkand and Badakhshan, apples from Kashmir, Kabul, and Jalalabad were also there. Pineapples from the sea-ports of the Europeans were also in the tray". These fruits were very costly, according to Bernier, but "nothing is considered so great a treat: it forms the chief expense of the Omrahs". White sugar and ice were also used by the nobility. According to the Dutch witness Pelsaert, "Gold and silver were used more in serving food than we do in our country; while cots and other furniture, of kinds unknown in our country, were also lavishly ornamented with gold and silver". Chinese porcelain, European glass-ware, wines, etc. were also in use among the Mughal nobility.

Though there were merchants with princely incomes, like Virjee Vora and Jagat Seth, they did not indulge in

such luxuries as did the official aristocracy. In many cases they were afraid of grand displays, lest they should attract the notice of the tax-gatherers and the covetous Mughal officials. Bernier has remarked, "In Delhi there is no middle state: a man must, either be of the highest rank or live miserably." This is obviously an exaggeration. As R. K. Mukerjee has pointed out, "the shopkeepers, the traders, the merchants, the bankers, as well as physicians and the writer caste, constituted the Middle Class in Mughal India". In contrast to the rich, no doubt, the vast majority of the people were poor. Nevertheless, the descriptions of the European witnesses may not be taken literally, particularly with regard to the so-called "nakedness" of the masses. In India, owing to the climatic conditions, abundance of clothing has never been necessary. Pelsaert noticed: "Their houses are built of mud and thatched roofs. Furniture there is little or none except some earthenware and beds. Their bed-clothes are scanty... they are sufficient in the hot weather, but the bitter cold nights are miserable indeed, and they try to keep warm over little cow-dung fires". Manrique adds: "They keep their dwellings very clean, usually scouring them over constantly with cattle dung mixed with mud, this being used, not only on the walls, but also the floor." Terry speaks of "such pure well-relished bread" which was used, obviously by those who were better off, along with "great abundance of other good provision as butter and cheese by reason of their great number of cattle, sheep and goats". *Khichri* made of rice and pulses boiled together is mentioned by most observers. Manrique, writing of Bengal (1629-43), says: "Their daily meal consists of rice with which, if they have nothing else to add, they take salt and are satisfied. They also use a kind of herb which is usually called Xaga (*shaka* or green vegetables). Those better off use milk, *ghi* and other lacteous preparations." Ralph Fitch wrote (1583-91): "These Gentiles will eate no flesh nor kill anything. They live with rice, butter, milke and fruits."

Some idea of the cost of living may be gathered from the following observation of Thomas Coryat (1612-17) who wrote to his mother in England: "At this present I have here in the city of Agra, where hence I wrote this letter, about twelve pounds sterling, which according to my manner of living upon the way at two pence sterling a day (for with that proportion I can live pretty well; such is the cheapness of all eatable things in Asia, drinkable things costing nothing,... will mainetaine mee very competently three yeares in my travel with meate, drinke and clothes."

We shall conclude this brief survey of the economic conditions in Mughal India with the word-picture of Ahmedabad provided by William Finch (1608-11) as a typical provincial town situated far away from the northern capitals of the Empire. "Ahmadabade or Amadavar", writes Finch, "is a goodly city and scituate on a faire river, inclosed with strong walls and faire gates, with many beautiful turrets. The castle is large and strong, . . . The buildings comparable to any citie in Asia or Africa, the streets large and well paved, the trade great (for almost every ten dayes goe from hence two hundred coaches richly laden with merchandise for Cambaya), the merchants rich, the artificers excellent for carvings, paintings, inlayd workes, imbroydery with gold and silver. At an houres warning it hath in readiness sixe thousand horse; the gates perpetually strong guarded; none suffered without license to enter, nor to depart without certificate."

5. *Art and Architecture*

Art and architecture are a mirror of the richness of life in any age or clime. The barrenness or absence of these complained of by Babur indicated the desolation which had overtaken the country during the period of anarchy that preceded the reconstruction under the Mughals. Art and architecture can flourish only in an atmosphere of abundance, exuberance and security, such as obtained in the heyday of the Mughal Empire. They declined and disappeared from the time of Aurangzeb, when the requisite conditions ceased to exist. We might roughly state that the century covered by the three reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan was the Golden Age of Mughal Culture in all its distinctive aspects. Music, painting, and architecture were three of its outstanding manifestations. Of these, music cannot be so easily assessed, because it no longer exists for us except in the names of famous singers like Tan Sen, Ram Das and Baz Bahadur and the stringed and other instruments which have come down to our days. Abul Fazl wrote of Tan Sen: "No singer like him has been in India for the last thousand years." Painting is easier to appreciate because some of its best specimens are still available. The same is true of architecture. Both Akbar and Jahangir were great patrons of music and painting, while Akbar and Shah Jahan had a passion for building. Aurangzeb was too much of a puritan to appreciate art in any form, except calligraphy. It is well known how, at a mock-funeral of music, he ordered that she be buried so deep that she may not rise again! The art of painting was too heretical for him to tolerate it. How even architecture

deteriorated under him is shown by the poor imitation of the Taj Mahal built at Aurangabad.

Abul Fazl has stated that "more than a hundred painters have become famous masters of the art (in the time of Akbar), while the number of those who attain perfection, and those who are middling, is very large. This is specially true of the Hindus; their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few, indeed, in the whole world are found equal to them". Of the seventeen leading artists named by Abul Fazl, no fewer than thirteen were Hindus. The most celebrated among them were Basawan, Daswant and Haribans; among the Muslim artists the most famous was Abdus Samad. Akbar's answer to those who objected to painting as un-Islamic was: "It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognising God: for if a painter, in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, comes to feel that he cannot bestow individuality on his work, he is forced to think of God, the Giver of Life, and will thus increase his knowledge." Jahangir was himself a connoisseur of art and claimed that he could identify the authorship of even particular portions executed by several artists in a composite picture; such was his familiarity with the differences in style and workmanship of individual artists. Sir Thomas Roe has recorded an instance of how Jahangir at once got copies made of foreign pictures, through his own artists, that could hardly be distinguished from the originals. Mughal artists, both Hindu and Muslim, took for their themes portraits of living personages, as well as scenes from natural life, like hunting wild animals, etc. Their pictures of birds and animals are very realistic; "for one outstanding feature of the painting of the Moguls," writes Mr. Percy Brown, "is its devotion to the delineation of likeness: Realism is its key-note". The purely Hindu tradition is illustrated by the Rajput or Kangra school, which also flourished during this age. Miniature paintings and book-illustrations formed another branch of exquisite Mughal art.

In the realm of architecture the Mughals left behind them the most impressive of their monuments. Here it is difficult to give an adequate account of all of them. To select, for the sake of brevity, is to inevitably leave out some of the best specimens. Nevertheless, we shall try and describe some of these monuments by way of illustration. "His Majesty," writes Abul Fazl, "plans splendid edifices and dresses the work of his mind in the garment of stone and clay." This is applicable to Shah Jahan no less than to Akbar. Both erected magnificent buildings for secular as well as religious purposes, and of civil no less than mili-

tary use. The forts of Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, and Lahore are illustrations of the last; few other builders of forts have displayed so much of artistic talent. They are at once imposing models of strength and beauty. Some of the architects, engineers and other technicians employed by the Mughal Emperors may have hailed from countries outside India, and some of the elements and features, artistic as well as technical, may be traced to foreign sources; but the bulk of the achievement was indubitably Indian and exhibited both Hindu and Muslim talent. Either deliberately or unconsciously, they built on earlier foundations, and it is possible to trace the evolution of Mughal architecture from the works of their predecessors.

The tendencies of the pre-Mughal architecture found their culmination in the noble mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sasaram in Bihar. It was designed and constructed by Aliwal Khan who is supposed to have been a native of the Punjab. Standing in the midst of an artificial lake, it is admired to this day for its surpassing architectural merit, masculine strength, and suggestion of eternal repose. Mr. Percy Brown has described it as "one of the most admirable monuments in the whole of India, and thoroughly expressive of the Indian genius." The tomb of Humayun at Delhi marks the next stage in architectural evolution towards the perfection that was attained in the Taj Mahal. Its architect was Mirak Mirza Ghiyas who was of Persian extraction, and brought up in the Timurid tradition. The Persians built almost entirely with brick, and decorated with terracotta and glazed tiles. But in India a change was called for by the difference in materials: *viz.*, stone and marble. Most of the edifices of Akbar's and Jahangir's time were built with the fire-red sandstone which was available in plenty near Fatehpur Sikri. "Clever workmen," says Abul Fazl, "chisel it more skilfully than any turner could carve wood." The marble was found at Makrana in Rajputana. This was such good building material that pavilions, courts, and columned halls came to be made out of pure white marble; where it was not used, the stone was faced with stucco, the plastered surfaces being polished to an egg-shell whiteness in keeping with the marble masonry.

In the buildings of Akbar and Jahangir, Hindu models were as often drawn upon as Muslim ones. Thus Man Singh's fort at Gwalior supplied the prototype for the Mughal forts of Delhi and Agra. Likewise, probably, the exquisite tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah at Agra, built wholly of white marble and decorated with *pietra dura* in semi-precious stones, was influenced by the Gol Mandal temple at Udaipur (A.D. 1600). The synthesis of the Hindu and

Muslim styles is most obvious in Jodh Bai's palace at Fatehpur Sikri and in the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra fort. The resemblance between this last and the main features and *motifs* in the richly sculptured Gobind Deo temple of Brindaban are so striking that it will not be wrong to suppose that both were designed by the same architect. The Hindu palaces of Rajputana and Malwa—of Amber, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Datia, Dig, etc.—“show by their style an association with the building art as evolved by the Mughals, but with elaborations of their own. . . It is not difficult to see in such buildings how the stone structures of the early Mughals were adapted to the more colourful requirements of the Hindu princes.”

The most exquisite of the Mughal edifices are undoubtedly the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chisti at Fatehpur Sikri, the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah at Agra, and the world famous Taj Mahal at the same place on the Jamuna. They form a class by themselves and should be truly described as jewel caskets magnified into architecture. The first was executed in the reign of Akbar, the second in that of Jahangir, and the last under Shah Jahan. Thus together they mark the continuity of the artistic tradition through a whole century. All are made of white marble, inset with other materials for decorative purposes alone. Whereas the first is exuberantly ornate in form and details, the second is simpler in form though rich in ornamental details; the Taj attains the perfection of chaste simplicity embellished with just that degree of ornament which serves to enhance its appeal and no more. Each of them is better seen and quietly admired than described in words however well chosen. It is tempting to dwell on some of the special features of these edifices, but considerations of space must necessarily reduce description to the minimum.

What distinguishes the tomb of Chisti from all others, according to Mr. Brown, is the character of its pillars and pilasters, and, more particularly, the style of the large and elaborate struts which support the wide-spreading eaves. “The shape of the pillars themselves is unusual; a zigzag pattern covers their shafts, and their capitals recall those of the stalactite order. But the convoluted struts with perforated ornament between the scrolls springing from halfway down their shafts and carried right up to a bracket under the eaves are unique. Based on somewhat similar supports in the temples of Gujarat, the Mughal craftsmen elaborated this idea to the extent here seen.” The same authority writes of the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah: “Whether regarded as an architectural composition of matchless refinement, as an example of applied art displaying rare

craftsmanship, or as an artistic symbol of passionate filial devotion, the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah expresses in every part of it the high aesthetic ideals that prevailed among the Mughals at the time." The Taj Mahal has been described by many observers in ecstatic terms as "a dream in marble", "romance in stone", "immortal tear on the cheek of eternity", and so on. Mr. Brown clinches the controversy about its alleged alien design by stating that the standing testimony of the tomb itself shows in all its aspects that it was "the natural evolution of the style true to tradition and entirely unaffected by occidental influence". Though some of the craftsmen came from Baghdad, Shiraz, Constantinople, Bukhara, Samarqand and Kandahar, most of them were from Delhi, Lahore, Multan and Kanauj. Ustad Isa, "the best designer of his time", co-ordinated the work of all and produced the miracle of the Taj Mahal. "In this manner, by a combination of the finest art and the most expert construction, the Mughal craftsmen produced in the Taj Mahal a monument which has most nearly reached the utmost height of perfection." While its main structure is attributed to the Muslim architects, its ornamental parts are considered the product of the Hindu genius.

Added to this the building owes not a little of its sensuous charm to the extraneous effects of the atmosphere, and the variations in the light on its marble surfaces. The marble when first won from the uninspiring mounds of Makrana is itself of a superb texture—white with a delicate grey grain. In the course of centuries, mellowed by the sun, and sand-blasted by the red dust of the surrounding country, driven into it by the monsoon rains, it has acquired a patina, almost imperceptible but sufficient to affect its colour values. The result is that the building assumes at different times a variety of tints, from a cold grey at dawn, shimmering white at noon, and suffused with a tender blush rose in the after glow, with a wide range of half-tones in between. And in the light of the moon another and entirely changed palette is called into requisition. On some of these occasions, with the flowers in the garden, painting the foreground with their vivid colouring, it seems as if the hand of nature and the hand of man had united and done their utmost to produce a spectacle of supremely moving beauty.

The contributions of the Mughals to the art of horticulture would take an independent volume to describe. Indeed, Mr. C. M. V. Stuart has done that already in his *Gardens of the Great Mughals*. The traces of some of them are still to be found in the Shalamar gardens in Lahore and Kash-

mir, and the Anguri Bagh and Rani Bagh at Agra. "One of the loveliest of these gardens is the Shalamar Bagh in Kashmir, constructed by Jahangir, which, however, owes not a little of its charm to the wonderful situation with a background of mountains and a view over the crystal waters of the Dal lake. Immense *chanar* trees grace its walks and green swards, water ripples and cascades down its sloping channels, lotus-bud fountains dance in the sunshine and beds of flowers give colour and fragrance to the whole."

6. Literature

Like most other flourishing periods of history—even as in England in the Elizabethan age which was contemporaneous with the Mughals in India—we find a vast and varied literature produced during the period under review. It was partly the outcome of patronage from the Emperors and their courtiers, and partly spontaneous. While the former was largely in Persian, the latter was mostly in Hindi, the language of the masses. "Urdu" at this stage meant a "camp" (dialect?), but it had not yet acquired the status of literature. Babur's mother-tongue was Turki—the language also of his great *Waqiat* or autobiography—but the official medium was Persian. Turki was displaced more and more by Hindi as the language of conversation even within the royal household, particularly from the time of Akbar. Arabic and Sanskrit were confined to the learned among the Muslims and the Hindus principally for religious purposes. One very important contribution in this field made by the Mughals was to remove the barriers between the Hindus and Muslims in the realm of letters. While most of the Hindus who had anything to do with the Court had necessarily to study Persian—as English in our time—not a few Muslim courtiers studied Sanskrit and translated Hindu classics into Persian at the Emperor's command. Before long, Hindus became teachers of Persian to the Muslims, and produced notable works in that language. Jauhar in the time of Humayun, Rai Bhara Mall in the time of Shah Jahan, and Bhim Sen in the time of Aurangzeb wrote important historical works which are of great use to us. The *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* and *Chahar Gulshan* have been referred to previously. At Akbar's Court lived several scholars who knew both Persian and Sanskrit. The most eminent among them were Abul Fazl and his brother Faizi and Abdul Qadir Badauni. They prepared translations, in Persian, of Hindu works like the *Mahabharata* (*Razm-nama*), the *Atharva Veda*, the *Ramayana*, *Yogavasishtha*, *Rajatarangini*, *Panchatantra*, *Harivamsa*,

Lilavati, etc. To these were added Persian translations of the *Upanishads* and other philosophical works of the Hindus by Dara Shukoh, under the title of *Majma'-ul-Bahrain* or 'Mingling of the Two Oceans'. This work of translation, however, was not confined to Sanskrit alone. The Bible was similarly rendered into Persian, and the Turki autobiography of Babur—*Waqiat-i-Baburi*—was translated into Persian by Abdur Rahman Khan-khanan (son of Bhairam Khan).

Babur has been described as 'the Prince of Autobiographers' on account of the excellence of his *Waqiat*. Elphinstone regarded this work as "almost the only piece of real history in Asia", and Beveridge wrote: "it is one of these priceless records which are for all time"; while according to Lane-Poole: "If ever there was a case when the testimony of a single historical document, unsupported by any other evidence, should be accepted as sufficient proof, it is the case with Babur's *Memoirs*". Jahangir followed his example and wrote his *Tuzuk* or *Waqiat-i-Jahangiri*. "Taken as a whole, the work is very interesting, and, assuming that Jahangir is mainly responsible for its authorship, it proves him to have been a man of no common ability. He records his weaknesses and confesses his faults (like Babur) with candour, and a perusal of this work would leave a favourable impression both of his character and talents". (Elliot & Dowson)

The other great historical works of this period are the *Akbar-nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl, the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizam-ud din Ahmad, and the *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh* of Badauni, for the reign of Akbar; the *Badshah-nama* of Abdul Hamid Lahori for the reign of Shah Jahan; and the *Alamgir-nama* of Mirza Muhammad Kazim and the *Muntakhab-ul Lubab* of Khafi Khan for the reign of Aurangzeb. It is characteristic of Aurangzeb that he did not approve of the work of Muhammad Kazim when it was shown to him, in the tenth year of his reign. He prohibited its continuation, because he considered that "the cultivation of inward piety was preferable to the ostentatious display of his achievements".

It is a relief to turn from these courtly works in Persian, great and interesting as some of them undoubtedly are, to the Hindi literature of the times, which was produced by the people. Some of the Hindi writers, indeed, wrote under the patronage of either the Emperor himself, like Birbal and Sur Das, or nobles like Abdur Rahim Khan-khanan, Raja Man Singh, Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh, all of whom were themselves writers of no mean ability besides being patrons of other scholars. Most of this literature is in

poetry, including treatises on poetics and literary criticism. Barring a few of the latter type, their themes are almost exclusively religious: of the cult of Rama or Krishna. The *Ramacharita-manasa* of Tulasi Das, written in the eastern Hindi dialect of Benares, is the most celebrated religious book among the Hindus of all classes of Northern India even today, with the possible exception of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Tulasi Das was a contemporary of Akbar and Jahangir, and Abdur Rahiman and Man Singh appear to have been acquainted with him, though he composed at Benares, far from the influences of the Imperial Court. The *Tulasi Ramayana*, as it is popularly called, is a unique product of the Hindu genius, noted alike for its high moral tone, picturesque poetic imagery and deep religious emotion. Sur Das's *Sur Sagar* represents its counterpart in the western dialect, *Brij Bhasha*, of Mathura and Brindaban. Its author was blind and is hence described as "the blind bard of Agra". His inspiration was the love of the Gopis for Sri Krishna. An oft-quoted estimate of these poets declares: "Sur is the sun, Tulasi the moon, Keshav Das is a cluster of stars; but the poets of today are like so many glowworms giving light here and there." Another contemporary of Akbar stated: "Gang excels in sonnets, and Birbal in *kavitta* metre; Keshav's meaning is ever profound; but Sur possesses the excellences of all three." A *Nakshik* and a commentary on the *Bhagavata Purana* were the most important works of Keshav Das.

In this brief sketch we cannot mention even the names of all the celebrated writers and their works. The reader will find a good account of them in *A History of Hindi Literature* by F. E. Keay. We would, in particular, draw attention to the works of poets like Bihari Lal Chaurbe (A.D. 1603-63), Bhushan Tripathi who wrote his *Shivraj Bhushan* on Shivaji, and Lal Kavi who wrote *Chhatra Prakash* on Chhatrasal Bundela. Last but not the least, were a host of poets belonging to the Kabir-panthi, Dadu-panthi, Maluk-Dasi and other sects whose special mission it was to bring about a *rapprochement* between the Hindus and Musalmans. The writings of the great Sikh Gurus, collected in the *Granth Sahib*, made no small contribution to this attempt at religious synthesis. The spirit of their teachings is best reflected in the following lines of Kabir:

If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this world belong?

If Ram be within the image which you find upon your pilgrimage, then who is there to know what happens without?

Hari is in the East; Allah in the West. Look within your heart for there you will find both Karim and Ram;

All the men and women of the world are His living forms.

Kabir is the child of Allah and of Ram: He is my Guru, He is my Pir.

The influence of Hindu thought as well as the poetical qualities of Kabir's compositions are well brought out in another magnificent verse:

No one knew the mystery of that weaver: who came into the world and spread the warp.

The earth and sky are the two beams: the sun and moon are two filled shuttles.

Taking a thousand threads he spreads them lengthways: today he weaveth still, but hard to reach is the far-off end.

Says Kabir, Joining Karma with Karma, woven with un-woven threads, splendidly the weaver weaves.

7. Criticism

We have now come to the end of our description of the Mughal period of supremacy over India when it was in the plenitude of its power and prosperity. Before we proceed to discuss the circumstances which led to its decline and disappearance, in the course of the eighteenth century, we may note some of the main points of criticism levelled against it by modern scholars, particularly Europeans. V. A. Smith and W. H. Moreland have both stressed the gloomier sides of the Mughal administration which no student of Indian history can afford to overlook. Other writers, both foreign and Indian, have reproduced that criticism without giving much independent thought either to the nature of their evidence or the character of their arguments. The fact of the ultimate failure of the Mughal Empire and its disappearance ought not to prejudice us against the better side of their achievements. At the same time, neither the grandeur of their material contributions, nor patriotic sentiment, should blind us to a recognition of the defects and shortcomings of the Mughals which led to their downfall.

The entire criticism boils down to two points: (1) that the administration was essentially foreign in its character and composition, oppressive, and increasingly inefficient; and (2) that its economic and social results were disastrous to the happiness and welfare of the masses at large. We may at once state that both these are partial truths calculated to give very misleading impressions if they are not scrutinised with sufficient care. Let us examine the implications one after another.

In the first place, how far could the Mughal administration be described as "foreign in character and composition"? The Mughals were, no doubt, foreigners to begin with, but from Akbar onwards they were Indians by birth. The personnel of their government was also largely Indian, if we take the entire administration, rank and file, into

account; but the key positions were dominated by foreign Muslim immigrants from Persia and Central Asia. According to Bernier, the preference for fair complexioned men shown in practice—though in theory careers were open to talent—was so great, that officers in higher positions invariably preferred to take wives from Kashmir in order to perpetuate the “Mugal complexion”. He observes that “offices of trust and dignity are exclusively held by those of the Mogol race. . . (and) that they alone obtain rank in the army. These situations are filled indifferently by them and strangers from all countries—the greater part being Persians—some by Arabs, and others by Turks. To be considered a Mogol, it is enough if a foreigner have a white face and profess Mahometanism.” Religion, of course, was no bar to employment in the time of the liberal Akbar and his two immediate successors. But Aurangzeb expressly declared for his own co-religionists in the matter of employment as well as privilege. Not only did he re-impose the *jiziya*, but also exacted from the Hindus customs duties at double the rate levied from Muslims. Though the profits of government were spent within the country, the lion’s share of the benefits went to the ruling class. The paternal interest shown by the benevolent Emperors in the general welfare of their subjects, therefore, brought only partial compensation. Even Indian Muslim subjects, according to Professor M. Habib, had no better status in the eyes of the Mughal aristocracy than the Indian Christians under the British regime in India. Nevertheless, to describe Mughal rule as wholly alien in character would be an exaggeration. The people had no national consciousness and did not feel that the Emperors and their officers were “foreigners”: they could only feel that they were, either good or bad. When they felt that they were being oppressed, they were not so supine as not to rebel. The Jat, Satnami, Bundela and Sikh revolts showed that the people would not acquiesce in whatever the ruler might do. Akbar evoked from his subjects a genuine affection and regard. Neither Jahangir nor Shah Jahan were hated by their subjects. Tavernier did not exaggerate when he said that Shah Jahan “reigned not so much as a king over his subjects, but rather as a father over his family and children”.

Moreland is correct when he writes: “The welfare of the people depended partly on the character of the local officials, partly on the efficiency of the system of control, and partly on the ideals of the Ruler.” About the ideals of the rulers we have said enough already; about the control of the local officials, Moreland himself admits: “There are cases on record in which individuals or communities appealed suc-

cessfully against oppression by local officials". There are instances of their having been transferred, dismissed or otherwise punished. Some of the examples of oppression cited by Moreland are from Golkonda, which was not within the Mughal Empire before its conquest by Aurangzeb in 1687. The controls may not have been as efficient as under modern governments, but the charge of inefficient administration as a whole is refuted by the fact of its long survival. It endured long enough to be copied and adapted by the British nearly two centuries later. In the words of Edwardes and Garrett: "In brief, the verdict of the historian rightly reminds us that modern India owes much more than is superficially apparent, to the administrative genius of the Great Mughal".

Secondly, how far was Mughal rule economically disastrous to the country as a whole? This is a very vital question; for the real character of a government must, in the last analysis, be judged by its economic and social consequences. Here the Mughals failed from faults of both omission and commission. India was, no doubt, rich in the time of the Mughals, as we have noticed earlier. But that prosperity was not shared by all classes of her people, nor was it as great as it might have been. "Throughout the Mughal age," writes Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee, "India maintained a balance of trade in her favour." One of the reasons why India fell a prey to foreign exploitation by maritime powers of the West, ultimately, was due to her lack of a national navy. This was the most glaring defect of the Mughal Empire. On the other hand, the social and economic structure of the country was such that it provided ample scope for foreigners to achieve complete economic penetration. Thus, when trade and industry passed into their hands, the unproductive and parasitical official classes could do little even to save themselves. When the Emperors became weak, the nobles scrambled for power and position in the capitals and neglected the economic foundations of real welfare. Mere courtiers, they were more accustomed to consume wealth than to produce it.

Another important factor that led to fatal consequences was the assignment of *jagirs* and farming out of revenues to irresponsible profiteers. Akbar had wisely attempted to rectify these medieval evils by the substitution of cash payments and cash collections through agents or officers of the Central Government. But after his death, the old practices reasserted themselves, and the "farmers" of revenue exploited the peasants so as to fill their own pockets at the expense of the people with little profit to

the Government. Harsh as the following summary characterisation of the situation by Moreland may appear, it substantially represents the state of affairs brought about by the absence of a sound economic policy:

Weavers, naked themselves, toiled to clothe others. Peasants, themselves hungry, toiled to feed the towns and cities. India, taken as a unit, parted with useful commodities in exchange for gold and silver, or in other words gave bread for stones. Men and women, living from season to season on the verge of hunger, could be contented so long as the supply of food held out: when it failed, as it so often did, their hope of salvation was the slave-trader, and the alternatives were cannibalism, suicide or starvation. The only way of escape from that system lay through an increase of production, coupled with a rising standard of life, but this road was barred effectively by the administrative methods in vogue, which penalised production and regarded every indication of increased consumption as a signal for fresh extortion.

It will be wrong to apply this description literally and in its entirety to the Mughal administration as a whole. In normal times there was plenty to go round for all. As Manucci said about Bengal: "All things are in great plenty here, fruits, pulses, grain, muslin, cloths of gold and silver." Prices too were sufficiently low for the poor to have their necessities and the upper classes to indulge in luxuries; but there was no margin of insurance against bad times. Hence famines took a heavier toll than they need have. There are harrowing descriptions of these in the writings of contemporary historians and travellers. Nevertheless, it is unhistorical to blame the Mughal administration for not having done anything to mitigate such suffering. The following account given by Abdul Hamid Lahori in his *Badshah-nama* provides enough evidence to the contrary:

The Emperor in his gracious kindness and bounty directed the officials of Burhanpur, Ahmedabad and the country of Surat, to establish soup-kitchens, or alms-houses, such as are called *langar* in the language of Hindusthan, for the benefit of the poor and destitute. Every day sufficient soup and bread was prepared to satisfy the wants of the hungry. It was further ordered that so long as His Majesty remained in Burhanpur 5,000 rupees should be distributed among the deserving poor every Monday... Thus on 20 Mondays one *lakh* of rupees was given away in charity. Ahmedabad had suffered more than any other place, and so His Majesty ordered the officials to distri-

bute 50,000 rupees among the famine-stricken people. Want of rain and dearness of grain had caused distress in many other districts. So, under the direction of the wise and generous Emperor, taxes amounting to nearly 70 lakhs of rupees were remitted by the revenue officers—a sum amounting to nearly 8 crores of *dāms*, amounting to one-eleventh part of the whole revenue. When such remissions were made from the exchequer, it may be conceived how great were the reductions made by the nobles who held *jagirs* and *mansabs*.

There is evidence of similar action having been taken on the occasion of famines in other parts of the Empire, e.g. in Kashmir in 1641 and the Punjab in 1646. In the former case, Rs. 1,00,000 were disbursed, besides the provision of cooked food worth Rs. 200 daily. Another Rs. 30,000 were paid to Tarbiyat Khan for relief measures; and he having failed in his duties, the work was entrusted to Zafar Khan who was given a further grant of Rs. 20,000. Rs. 30,000 were similarly spent in the Punjab where people had suffered from excessive rains. "Sold children were ransomed by the Government and restored to their parents." The *Badshah-nama* also refers to the construction of the Ravi Canal near Lahore "benefitting the cultivation of the country through which it should pass. Likewise the Jamuna Canal, in the *parganah* of Khizrabad, was repaired and "a new channel excavated from Safidun to the regal residence, a distance of 30 kos".

Lastly, Sir Jadunath Sarkar has expressed the opinion that the aim of the Mughal Government was "extremely limited, materialistic, almost sordid." Under Mughal rule "the socialistic activities of a modern State," he says, "were left to the community, to society or the caste brotherhood, and the student of Indian administration has to pass over them in silence." He admits, however, that such activities were undertaken for the Muslim portion of the population. But if we note the evidence he himself has cited, in his *Mughal Administration*, we shall come to a different conclusion. In dealing with the fiscal policy of the Mughal Emperors, we quoted from the "Manual of Instructions" issued by Akbar and the *firman*s of Aurangzeb, and saw how solicitous the rulers were for the welfare of the cultivators. They encouraged the peasants to increase the cultivation, granted loans in cash and kind in difficult times, and remitted taxes when the farmers were unable to pay owing to unforeseen calamities. Famine relief and the construction of canals have just been referred to. It is difficult to understand how these benefits could be confined only to the Muslim section of the population. That the policy of

the supreme head of the Mughal Government was "not to practice any exaction on the ryot", Sarkar himself states, "is manifest from the contemporary histories and letters, and can be proved to have been a reality and not merely a pious wish. Several instances are recorded in the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb in which harsh and exacting revenue collectors and even provincial Viceroys were dismissed on the complaint of their subjects reaching the Emperor's ears." The duties of the Kotwal enumerated by him (see *ante*, pp.135-6) indicate the wide sphere of the State's activities. They included, in addition to police duties, the regulation of weights and measures and prices of commodities, control of the sale and manufacture of intoxicating drugs, control of prostitution, prohibition of forced *sati*, prevention of rich men buying much and selling little (creating monopolies), and regulating even private incomes and expenditure, "because when a man spends in excess of his income it is certain that he is doing something wrong". The Kotwal was also expected to "set the idle to some handicraft". We know that Akbar not only appointed a Censor of Public Morals, but also laid down an age limit for the performance of circumcision in the case of Muslims, and prescribed minimum ages for marriage of boys and girls—16 and 14 respectively—"because the offspring of early marriages were weakly". He prohibited cow-slaughter and forced conversions, and laid down strict punishments for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. He promulgated a new and rational faith in order to bring about greater religious and social harmony among his subjects, and at the same time, declared that "no man should be interfered with on account of his religion, and every one should be allowed to change his religion if he liked". It is difficult to understand how all this could be construed as indicating the "narrow, materialistic and sordid" aims of the Mughal Government. At one place Sarkar brushes aside the duties of the Kotwal, as enumerated by Abul Fazl, as representing only the ideal and not the actual state of things; but before closing the subject he quotes Manucci (ii. 420-421) as giving a "more valuable account of the Kotwal's work from actual observation. According to this authentic testimony, it was the Kotwal's business "to stop the distillation of spirits; and to see that there were no public women in the town, nor anything else forbidden by the King".

NOTE

COINAGE: Coinage and the standards of weight and linear measurement are of great importance in the study

of the economic life of the country. During the period of our study there was a bewildering variety of all these at different times, in different reigns, and in the different parts of the country. Further complications were introduced by changes effected within a single reign, e.g. under Jahangir who arbitrarily increased the values of units more than once.

The lineage of our modern currency could be really traced back to the coins of Sher Shah Sur. The *rupee* of Sher Shah, standardised at 178 grains of silver, was adopted by Akbar and continues to be the unit even now, with a few variations. The current *rupee* weighs 180 grains, but its silver content is very much reduced. The English merchants exchanged this for 2s. 6d. and 2s. 3d. according to fluctuations in the price of silver. Jahangir's *rupee* was 20 p.c. heavier.

The most popular coin in circulation under the Mughals was the *dam* which, too, was a continuation of the coin in use under Sher Shah. It weighed between 320-330 grains of copper. There were also $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ *dams* in use. The term "pice" is often confusingly used as referring sometimes to a *dam* and at other times to its half.

The *tankah* under Akbar weighed 664 grains. It was divided by the decimal standard: 10 *tankis*=1 *tankah*.

The gold *muhar*, weighing 170-175 grains, was the coin of the highest value in Mughal times. Some multiples of this, weighing up to 2,000 tolas, were used for gift purposes. There is a silver coin of Aurangzeb, weighing $5\frac{1}{2}$ English pounds, in the Dresden Museum, and a cast of a 200-*muhar* of Shah Jahan's reign in the British Museum.

The coins of Akbar and Jahangir were noted for their artistic execution. Rare among Muslim coins are those of Akbar with his full face on one side and the sun on the other; and of Jahangir with the wine-cup, and the same Emperor with Nur Jahan in other types. "Mercantile affairs in this country," states Abul Fazl, "are mostly transacted in round *muhars*, *rupees*, and *dams*."

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES: The chief units of weight were the *man* (maund) and *ser* (seer). The standard *man* was 40 *sers*, but the value of the *ser* was not constant. In Akbar's time the *ser*=30 *dams*, or about 55 pounds (lb.) to the *man*. Under Jahangir it weighed *ser*=36 *dams* i.e. 66 lbs.=*man*. Shah Jahan raised this further to *ser*=40 *dams* or *man*=nearly 74 lbs. The modern standard *maund* is 82 lbs. 1 *ser*=2 lbs.

The *Ilahi gaz* of Akbar was=31 inches. Later it was increased to 32, and even 40 inches under Shah Jahan.

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CHAPTER SIX

DECLINE AND DISAPPEARANCE

1. *Disintegration: Nature and Causes.* 2. *The Greater and the Later Mughals: A Study in Contrasts.* 3. *The King-Makers and Unmakers of the Empire.* 4. *The Nizam and the Nawabs.* 5. *The Irani and Durrani Invaders.*

1. *Disintegration:*

Nature and Causes

IN THE preceding five chapters we described the circumstances in which the builders of the Mughal Empire came to India, the vicissitudes under which the first two rulers of the Mughal dynasty, Babur and Humayun, laboured, the Afghan episode of Sher Shah Sur and his futile successors, the effective refounding of the Empire under the great Akbar, its territorial expansion over the greater part of the Indian peninsula, its consolidation and administrative organisation during the century and a half which elapsed between the accession of Akbar and the death of Aurangzeb (1556-1707) and their contributions to the general progress of the country. From the point of view of the making of Modern India, this was a momentous epoch in its potentialities for good and evil. The good that the Mughals undoubtedly did to India was the restoration of the political unity which she had lost for centuries, and the *rapprochement* that they very nearly brought about between Hindus and Muslims, until the severe limitations of this nation-building process were disclosed by the reactionary character of Aurangzeb's unfortunate reign. It cannot be gainsaid that the good work begun by the statesmanlike Akbar was vastly undone by the short-sighted though titanic Alamgir I. The seeds of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, whose nature and causes we shall study in this chapter, were already apparent during the last fifty years of its history so far traced. Whether we look at the sequel from the angle of the fate of the Imperial family, or from that of the immediate future of the country, the eighteenth century in India was a period of national disasters.

The collapse of the Mughal Empire after the death of Aurangzeb has been picturesquely described by Lane-Poole in a sentence which is thought-provoking. "As some Imperial corpse, preserved for ages in its dread seclusion, crowned and armed and still majestic, yet falls to dust at

the mere breath of heaven", he writes, "so fell the Empire of the Mughal when the great name that guarded it was no more."* Similarly, V. A. Smith has observed: "The collapse of the Empire came with a suddenness which at first sight may seem surprising. But the student who has acquired even a moderately sound knowledge of history will be surprised that the Empire lasted so long rather than because it collapsed suddenly". However, it will be helpful to remember that the collapse of the Mughal Empire was not so sudden as, say, that of either Napoleon's or Hitler's Empire. The process of disintegration was a long-drawn agony, for the Emperors no less than for the country. Its real nature will be appreciated fully only at the end of this chapter. Here we shall enumerate summarily some of the crucial factors that contributed to the tragic results.

In the first place, it is an inherent defect of hereditary rule that its efficiency cannot be guaranteed for generations. The Mughals were no exception to this historical phenomenon. It was their good fortune that, for nearly two centuries from Babur to Aurangzeb, there was actually a line of competent successors who could sustain the Imperial growth without serious interruption. The character of the Later Mughals, as we shall presently see, was a sad contrast to that of their great predecessors.

Secondly, the dynastic rule of the Indian Mughals was weakened further by the absence of an accepted law of peaceful succession like primogeniture. Hence, there was, at the end of every reign or the beginning of the next, a violent fratricidal or patricidal struggle for the throne on the tragic principle of *takht ya takhta*: 'either the throne or the coffin'.

Thirdly, there was in India no independent nobility or strong middle-class to guarantee governmental stability in the event of the monarchs' failure. This lack was due to a variety of causes which are not capable of uncontroversial statement. Some of the reasons are indicated below. The Mughal polity was such that the middle and lower classes had no place in it, so far as determinative roles were concerned. There was a sprinkling of the upper-class Hindus (mainly Rajputs) in the higher ranks of the *mansabdars*, but the effective section of the official peerage was foreign in personnel. During the earlier phase, under the greater

* It may be noted that the situation at the death of Bahadur Shah I was such that the Imperial corpse lay in state for about ten weeks (28th February—15th May 1712) before it was buried at Delhi, after the fratricidal war terminated in favour of Jahandar Shah I.

Mughal Emperors, they were mostly men of ability, integrity and loyalty; but in the period of decadence, under the later Mughals, the nobility, whether native or alien, was mostly selfish, parasitical, or treacherous. It was also split into factions—Irani, Turani and Hindusthani—which made confusion worse confounded.

Fourthly, the army, with which the earlier Mughals had carved out and extended their dominions, had now become a gorgeous pageant without morale, discipline or efficiency. "In short," as Irvine writes, "excepting want of personal courage, every other fault in the list of military vices may be attributed to the degenerate Moghuls: indiscipline, want of cohesion, luxurious habits, inactivity, bad commissariat, and cumbrous equipment."

Fifthly, owing to the administrative paralysis caused by the growth of feudal parasitism (particularly in those parts of the Empire where the Emperor did not carry much weight), the financial resources had rapidly dwindled even during the life-time of Aurangzeb. There was not enough money for the repairs and upkeep of the forts. "While the land for granting *jagirs* is limited," Inayetullah Khan complained, "how can an unlimited thing (i.e., the retinue daily paraded before the Emperor) equal a limited one" (viz., the supply of available land)? The only reply that Aurangzeb could give was: "Praised be God! and again praised be God. Although my legs are broken (i.e. metaphorically), my heart is not broken. . . . To believe in the scantiness and limits of God's Court is the essence of infidelity and sin". "When Aurangzeb died," writes Moreland, "national bankruptcy was assured."

Sixthly, Aurangzeb by his religious fanaticism had not only alienated, but also antagonised the vast majority of the Hindu population, and roused the Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats and Marathas against the Empire. Though under the later Mughals there was little of religion to speak of, and rank opportunism was rampant, the far-reaching results of the "original sin" were still visible.

Seventhly, the Irani and Durrani invasions on the one hand, and the European encroachments on the other, indicated the unpreparedness of the country to meet foreign military aggression from outside, and the not less dangerous foreign economic exploitation from within.

Lastly, the national morale had sunk so low that patriotism, even "as the last refuge of scoundrels", seemed to be tragically absent everywhere. "The king is the cause of the character of the times", runs an Indian adage. Both the princes and the peers were now corrupt. When gold rusts, what will iron do?

2. *The Greater and the Later Mughals:*

A Study in Contrasts

There are instances in history where good and bad rulers alternated like day and night; but few parallels could be found anywhere in the world to the sustained contrast that existed between the earlier and the later Mughal Emperors. From Babur to Aurangzeb there were six great monarchs who, with all their faults, constituted a rare galaxy of which any country might well be proud. Together they reigned, with the short interruption in the time of Humayun (1540-56), for 181 years (1526-1707); while their feeble successors, from Shah Alam I to Shah Alam II, numbering eleven,* were dismissed within 100 years (1707-1806). Thus the average duration for the rulers of the first set was about three times that for the second. From the point of view of character and of the territory ruled over by them, there was no comparison between the two. Starting from scratch in the time of Babur, the Mughal Empire in the time of Aurangzeb practically covered the entire country from Afghanistan to Assam and from Kashmir to Mysore. Under the later Mughals, it rapidly dwindled to Delhi and its immediate surroundings; until the last three successors of the Great Mughals were reduced to ciphers—masters not even of their own persons. It was said in derision: "The Empire of Shah Alam stretched from Delhi to Palam!" The first six Emperors, who had to fight for the throne against rivals in their own family, emerged head and shoulders above their defeated kindred. Those that survived the later contests for the throne were feeble puppets in the hands of their subordinates who were King-Makers or *de facto* rulers. Indeed, as one writer said without much exaggeration: "The ancestors of Aurangzeb who swooped down on India from the north were ruddy men in boots: the courtiers among whom Aurangzeb grew up were pale persons in petticoats. Babur, the founder of the Empire, had swum every river which he met with during thirty years' campaigning; the luxurious nobles around the

* (i) Shah Alam (Bahadur Shah I): 1707-12; (ii) Jahandār Shah: 1712-13; (iii) Farukh-siyar: 1713-19; (iv) Rafi-ud Darajat, Neku-siyar, and Rafi-ud Daulah: 1719; (v) Muhammad Shah and Sultan Ibrahim Shah Jahan II (1720): 1719-48; (vi) Ahmad Shah: 1748-54; (vii) Alamgir II: 1754-59; (viii) Shah Alam II: 1759-1806; (ix) Akbar II: 1806-37; and (x) Bahadur Shah II: 1837-57.

Including the nominal Emperors, these made thirteen; but though the last two counted more regnal years, they had been deprived of all vestiges of Imperial authority excepting their titles.

youthful Aurangzeb wore skirts made of innumerable folds of the finest white muslin and went to war in palanquins." As I have pointed out elsewhere:* "Kam Bakhsh, as a captive on his death-bed regretted that a descendant of Timur was captured alive. But Jahandar Shah and Ahmad Shah were not ashamed to be caught up in the tresses of their concubines who came between them and their duties as Emperors:

They looked on beauty

And turned away from duty!

The former fooled himself in public with his Lal Kunwar; and the latter buried himself in his seraglio—which extended over four square miles—for weeks together without seeing the face of a male!" The Emperor was the central pillar and sheet-anchor of the State: to witness the tragedy of the deterioration of his character is to lay bare one of the most important causes of the decline and disappearance of the Mughal Empire.

Bahadur Shah, the immediate successor to Aurangzeb (1707-12) was already advanced in years (67) when he ascended the throne. In personal character he was not an unworthy successor to the greater Mughals, and like them he was called upon to demonstrate the law of the survival of the fittest in a war of succession with his brothers. No better picture of this Emperor could be given than that provided by the contemporary historian Khafi Khan:

For generosity, munificence, boundless good nature, extenuation of faults and forgiveness of offences, very few monarchs have been found equal to Bahadur Shah in the histories of past times, and especially in the race of Timur. But though he had no vice in his character, such complacency and such negligence were exhibited in the protection of the State and in the government and management of the country, that witty sarcastic people found the date of his accession in the words: *Shah-i-be-khabr* (Heedless King).

The next ruler was Jahandar Shah (1712-13). He too ascended the throne after defeating his three brothers in a bloody war. In his short reign, "violence and debauchery had full sway; it was a fine time for minstrels and singers and all the tribes of dancers and actors. . . . Worthy, talented and learned men were driven away, and bold impudent wits and tellers of facetious anecdotes gathered round." As Kamwar Khan put it: "The owl dwelt in the eagle's nest, and the crow took the place of the nightingale." It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that his sovereignty was very

* *Mughal Empire In India*, pp.836-7.

soon challenged. Contemporary chroniclers have described the resulting confusion in vivid terms: the army was ill-paid, the zamindars were rebellious, and the officers were corrupt and disloyal. To meet the insistent demands of the military, the hoarded treasures of the Imperial household were drawn upon. As Warid who witnessed the entire tragedy records: even the "clothes, carpets, and hangings were removed"; or, in the words of Khushal Chand, another eye-witness, "in one week, jewels worth 3 *crores* and 50 *lakhs* of rupees were distributed among them". The soldiers took what they liked, paying no heed to the clerks. In a moment "storehouses full of goods which had been preserved from the time of Babur were emptied. Nothing was left. Still, in spite of all these efforts, the claims of many of these men were not satisfied. They were told to wait until Agra was reached, when they would be paid from the treasure-houses at that place". Sovereignty which rested on such shaky legs could not be sustained. When Jahandar Shah fell, he was the victim of brutalities that do not bear a recital. Warid attributes his failure to "morning slumbering and midnight carousing".

Farukh-siyar succeeded with the help of the Saiyid Brothers (about whom anon). He was the tenant of the famous Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan for about six years (1713-19). According to Khafi Khan, "he had no will of his own. He was young (31 years), inexperienced and inattentive to the business of the State. . . From the beginning of his reign he brought upon himself all his troubles." His end was not less tragic than that of his predecessor. He was ultimately dragged down from his throne, "bare-headed and bare-footed, and subjected every moment to blows and the vilest abuse"; then he was imprisoned, starved, blinded, poisoned and, finally, strangled to death.

We may pass over the three pitiable wretches—Rafi-ud Darajat, Neku-siyar and Rafi-ud Daula; for their tale, though very brief (28th February—24th September 1719), is too tragic for words. The next puppet Padishah—Muhammad Shah—was only eighteen years of age when he was raised to the throne. The *Khutba* was, no doubt, read in his name, but all power was wielded by the Saiyid Brothers. "This prince," writes Rustam Ali, author of the *Tarikh-i-Hind*, "was a lover of pleasures and indolence, negligent of political duties, and addicted to loose habits, but of a somewhat generous disposition. He was entirely careless regarding his subjects. . . In a short time, many of the officers of the kingdom put out their feet from the path of obedience to the sovereign, and many of the infidels,

rebels, tyrants and enemies, stretched out the hands of rapacity and extortion upon the weaker tributaries and the poor subjects." The major event of his long reign, which lasted till 15th April 1748, was the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1738-9 of which we shall speak later. We may remember Muhammad Shah as the last occupant of the Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan. "Students of history will note his reign," observes Keene, "as the period in which were founded all the modern powers of the Indian peninsula. It seemed as though the Empire, like some of the lower animals, was about to reproduce its life by fissiparous generation." The *Siyr-ul Mutakherin* states: "The foundations of the Delhi monarchy were really rotten, but Muhammad Shah, by his cleverness, kept them standing. He may be called the last of the rulers of Babur's line, as after him kingship had nothing but the name left to it."

There is little of importance to be said about Ahmad Shah, though he ruled from 1748 to 1754. The scandals of his Court need not detain us. His own courtiers openly declared: "This Emperor has shown his unfitness for rule; he is unable to cope with the Marathas; he is false and fickle towards his friends. Let him be deposed and a worthier son of the house of Timur raised to the throne." Consequently, he was blinded and imprisoned in favour of a son of Jahandar Shah, who was proclaimed Emperor in July 1754 under the pretentious title of Alamgir (World Grasper!) II. Yet he too met with no better fate than that of his predecessors. On 30th November 1759, he was stabbed to death and his body was thrown out of the window unceremoniously, to lie on the banks of the Jamuna, stark naked, until it was picked up and buried in the sombre sepulchre of Humayun, the haunt of many a tragic memory.

Though a grandson of Kam Bakhsh was immediately raised to the throne, as Shah Jahan II, the next effective successor was Shah Alam II (1759-1806). The incursions of Ahmad Shah Durrani, culminating in the fateful third battle of Panipat in 1761, were the most spectacular events of his reign. Other happenings of greater consequence to the making of modern India will be dealt with in due course. Shah Jahan II was deposed by the Maratha general Sadashivrao Bhau on 10th October 1760. Though Shah Alam II had proclaimed himself Emperor simultaneously with his rival, he could not enter his capital until 6th January 1772, owing to circumstances which will become clear from the sequel. The *denouement* of the dynasty (which belongs to the nineteenth century) need not be anticipated at this stage.

3. The King-Makers and Unmakers of the Empire

The phrase "King-Makers" is used in the present context with reference to the Saiyid brothers, Abdullah Khan and Husain Ali Khan. They were descended from a family of foreign settlers hailing from Mesopotamia, but who regarded themselves as Indians. From the place of their domicile near Patiala, or for some unknown reason, they were also called the Saiyids of Barha. We have alluded to them already as the supporters of Farukh-siyar. Between 1712 and 1720, they wielded very great power within the Mughal Empire, and were responsible for the making and unmaking of several hapless princes whom they raised to the throne or deposed as their own interests demanded: they were Farukh-siyar, Rafi-ud Darajat, Rafi-ud-Daulah and Sultan Ibrahim. All of them were helpless puppets in the hands of these King-Makers and died victims of tragedy too deep for tears. The last prince enthroned by them, however, outlived the Saiyid brothers. He was Muhammad Shah (1719-48). An examination of the happenings of this period will reveal the process of the disintegration of the Empire which the great Mughals had so laboriously built up.

Broadly speaking, there were two groups or parties within the Empire: the Hindusthani and the Turani or foreign party. The former was led by the Saiyid brothers and supported by most of the *Hindusthan-za* (Indian born) Muslims, Rajputs, Marathas, etc. The latter were a miscellaneous group of foreigners composed of the Turani Mughals from beyond the Oxus river, Iranis or Persian adventurers (who were Shias), and Afghans, Arabs, Habshis (Abyssinians), Rumis (Turks), etc. In the time of Farukh-siyar who had no will of his own, the principal opponent of the Saiyids was Mir Jumla who was "unwilling that the reins of the government should pass into the hands of the Barha Saiyids". Later, particularly under Muhammad Shah, the rising star of the Turani party was Chin Kilich Khan, presently to be famous as Nizam-ul Mulk, Asaf Jah, founder of the Hyderabad State. On the other hand, Saiyid Abdullah (the elder of the King-Makers) was the Chief Minister (*Vazir*), and Saiyid Husain was Pay Master of the Forces (*Mir Bakhshi*). The former was the dictator at the Court, and the latter a formidable force in the provinces. Their supporter Ratan Chand held a position of power in Delhi. "His authority extended over all civil, revenue and legal matters, even to the appointment of *qazis* in the cities, and other judicial officers. All the other government officials were put in the background,

and no one could undertake any business but under a document with his seal."

The Emperor, finding the iron grip of the Saiyids irksome, attempted vainly to build up a body of "King's Friends" who should save him from the galling yoke; but the remedy proved very much worse than the disease. Being too impotent to realise his purposes openly, the 'sovereign' had recourse to despicable intrigues and stratagems. For instance, Husain Ali Khan was ordered to march with his army against the Rajputs, while secret dispatches were sent to Raja Ajit Singh, offering him attractive terms in the event of his getting rid of the Imperial general! When this attempt failed, Husain Ali was asked to go to the south as *Subahdar* of the Deccan; at the same time, Daud Khan Panni was secretly incited to confront him on the way, with a promise of viceroyalty if he should succeed in getting rid of the unwanted Saiyid! A more direct attack on Abdullah Khan was plotted under the very nose of Farukh-siyar, at the time of the *nauroz* ceremony; but the *Vazir*, being forewarned, overawed his enemies and saved himself. This led to the two brothers deciding to depose Farukh-siyar.

The tragic end of Farukh-siyar has already been described. The King-Makers' charge against him was that "he had forfeited all rights by his want of discretion, and his promotion of low fellows". One of these "low fellows" happened to be one Itikad Khan. He was sent to prison "with every mark of ignominy", as Khafi Khan has recorded; "his *jagir* was taken away from him and his house was seized. It was found to be full of jewels, cash, gold, objects of art and vessels of silver; and an investigation was ordered for the discovery and recovery of the jewels and pearls he had received as presents".* The choice of the

* An idea of the wealth which lay hidden in the vaults of the Imperial cities may be had from the following account of what was found when Neku-siyar was defeated at Agra: 'In one place 35 lakhs of *tankas* minted in the time of Sikandar Lodi (1488-1516) were recovered; and in another 78 lakhs of Shah Jahan's silver coinage, with 10,000 gold coins of Akbar's reign. The papers of account were also recovered. These showed that the money had been placed there by Alamgir (Aurangzeb) in the custody of Shayista Khan Amir-ul-umara; but upon the Emperor's death in the Dakhin, no further notice was taken of these hoards. They were not discovered in Bahadur Shah's or Jahandar Shah's time. In the ward-robe were a shawl studded with jewels which had belonged to Nur Jahan Begam, a sword used by the Emperor Jahangir, and the sheet sprinkled with pearls which Shah Jahan caused to be prepared for the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal.' One valuation puts the property at 1,80,00,000 rupees: 1,40,00,000 in cash and the rest in goods. Khafi Khan puts it still higher, viz. 2 or 3 crores of rupees. (Irvine)

next Emperor made by the Saiyids was Rafi-ud Darajat, a grandson of Bahadur Shah; but a rival arose in Neku-siyar who was supported by Mitra Sen (a Nagar Brahman) and Raja Jai Singh (Sawai) of Amber. The pretender held out at Agra. Husain Ali Khan's reaction to this challenge was characteristic of him: "If Agra were a fort of steel set in an encircling ocean," he said, "I shall, with one blow from my finger strike it down, so that beyond a little mud and dust no sign of it should be left on earth". Yet, as Khafi Khan puts it: "Laughter ends with weeping, and rejoicing with sorrow." This was true of the puppet princes as well as of the King-Makers. Having already witnessed the fate of the former, we shall now recount briefly the circumstances that brought about the fall of the Saiyid brothers.

The general position was, as stated before, one of rivalry between the Hindusthani and Turani parties within the Empire. Following the example of Farukh-siyar, Muhammad Shah as well tried to extricate himself from the clutches of the Saiyid dictators. His technique was the familiar one of intrigue. While the Saiyids were anxious to retain their hold on the capital as well as the provinces, the Emperor was trying to divide the brothers, one from the other, and to make use of the Nizam (Chin Kilich Khan) leader of the Turanis—to attain his ends. "After the accession of Muhammad Shah," writes Khafi Khan, "letters were sent by him and by his mother, Maryam Makani, through the medium of Itimad-ud Daulah Md. Amin Khan, to Nizam-ul Mulk, informing him that the constraint used by the Saiyids was so strict that... he had no power of giving orders; that the Saiyids in their futile scheming proposed, after settling the affairs of Neku-siyar and Giridhar, to get rid of Nizam-ul Mulk, and then to do as they pleased; and that Muhammad Shah and his mother had full confidence in Nizam-ul Mulk that he would not fail in the loyalty which his ancestors had ever exhibited."

We may not follow all the details of the moves and counter-moves on the diplomatic chess-board. They culminated in the boomerang recoiling on the Saiyid brothers themselves, one after the other. Saiyid Husain Ali Khan was assassinated at a place about 45 miles S.W. of Fatehpur-Sikri on 8th October 1720. On the day following this foul deed, Muhammad Shah held open *darbar*, at which all the partisans of the plot were loaded with gifts and promotions for the service rendered to the Emperor. Among these were Md. Amin Khan, his son Kamr-ud din, Haidar Quli Khan, Saadat Khan, and the Khan Dauran.

Saiyid Abdullah Khan tried to avenge his brother's assassination by a revolt on behalf of yet another puppet Emperor (Sultan Ibrahim) as a rival to Muhammad Shah. This ended in his defeat and imprisonment together with his royal protege. To cut a long story short, Abdullah died in prison in 1722, and the prince died in 1746. The future lay with Nizam-ul Mulk,—until his death and that of Emperor Muhammad Shah in the same year: 1748.

4. *The Nizam and the Nawabs*

We have already made acquaintance with Nizam-ul Mulk as the most prominent among the leaders of the Turani party and a serious rival to the Saiyid brothers. He played an important role as "the rising star" in the counsels of the Mughal Emperor during this critical period, and was frequently looked up to by the Emperor as a staunch support whenever a desperate situation arose. Interesting as the personal history of this great nobleman is, we shall chiefly concentrate here on its bearing on the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, which is our main theme. We might distinguish between (i) the Nizam's relations with the Emperor; and (ii) the circumstances leading to the establishment of the Nizam's Dominion in the Deccan.

(i) Nizam-ul Mulk and the Emperor: *Nizam-ul Mulk* was one of the titles conferred upon Mir Kamr-ud din, son of Ghazi-ud-din Firuz Jang (the Governor of Gujarat), by the Mughal Emperor. His grandfather, Khwaja Abid, hailed from Samarqand, and served Aurangzeb with great devotion. He was made Governor of Bidar and died in 1687 during the siege of Golkonda. His eldest son Mir Shihab-ud din (Ghazi-ud din Firuz Jang), too, distinguished himself under Aurangzeb in his fight against the Rajputs and the Marathas. Though he was blind during the last twenty years of his life, he still rendered efficient and loyal service until his death in 1710 when Bahadur Shah ruled. His son, Mir Kamr-ud din, born on 11th August 1671, acquired the titles of Chin Kilich Khan (1691), Khan Dauran Bahadur (1707), Khan Khanan Nizam-ul Mulk Bahadur Fateh Jang (1712), and finally Asaf Jah in 1737. He was successively Governor of the Deccan (1712), Malwa (1719), Gujarat (1723) and the Deccan again (1724), in the last of which he founded his own independent dynasty. When the Saiyid brothers who were his rivals and enemies died, their place was taken by the "King's Friends", and Md. Amin Khan was made *Vazir*. But this made little difference to the Emperor's dependence on his ministers. As one writer put it: Muhammad Shah "found the same viands over again on his table". The death of Amin Khan on 27th

January 1721, provided Nizam-ul Mulk with an opportunity to become *Vazir* of the Empire. While he was engaged in the consolidation of his power in the south, by the conquest of the Carnatic and Mysore territories, he was suddenly called upon by the Emperor to assume the *Vazirship* (20th February 1722). He was a great admirer of Aurangzeb whom he resembled in several respects, particularly in his tireless energy, devotion to religion and simplicity of life. Taking his new responsibilities in earnest, Nizam-ul Mulk set about reconditioning the administration. "Nizam-ul Mulk" writes Ghulam Husain (in the *Siyar-ul-mutakherin*), "who was a man of much gravity, of a reserved behaviour and fond of power, undertook to bring about a reform in some of the most important branches of public affairs... He recommended to the Emperor himself to assume in public an air of greater gravity and seriousness; to put aside all levity; to suit his behaviour to his situation; to restrain his servants within proper bounds; to divide his time into stated hours of business in every department; and to appoint a time for rendering justice in person—the most important duty of all princes and without which they cannot expect to satisfy heaven. In a word, to discharge worthily the duties incumbent on a great sovereign." For all his good intentions, however, not merely did these admonitions fall on deaf ears, but the *Vazir* was laughed at in the open *darbar*. His attempts to reduce corruption among the courtiers, and the feudal anarchy of the *jagirdars*, led to much organised opposition. To correct the misgovernment of Gujarat province, under its Governor Haidar Quli Khan, Nizam-ul Mulk took charge of the *subah* himself, and appointed Hamid Khan (his uncle) as his deputy there (February 1723). In May the same year, he appointed his cousin Azimullah Khan Deputy-Governor of Malwa for the same reason. He also reimposed the *jiziya* which had been abolished during the time the Hindusthani party was in power. These actions made things so hot for the Nizam at the capital that he relinquished his office of *Vazir* and retired into the Deccan (August 1724).

(ii) The Foundation of Hyderabad State: It is clear from the above that the course of events and the Nizam's self-interest alike indicated that his future lay in the Deccan rather than in the North. Here he had found his shelter and security during the period of the Saiyid dictatorship and made good his position in the face of great odds. His father and grandfather had distinguished themselves during the conquest of Golkonda and Hyderabad by Aurangzeb. It was as a reward for his services in the overthrow of Jahandar Shah that Nizam-ul Mulk had been first appointed

Subahdar of the Deccan in 1712. Thereafter Saiyid Husain Ali, fearful of his getting too strong in his charge, attempted to transplant him into a more convenient province like Malwa. Dilawar Ali Khan and Alam Ali Khan—both Saiyids—were sent against him, but Nizam-ul Mulk proved more than a match for them. They were both killed in action. The King-Makers were themselves soon after overthrown (1720). Then the Nizam became *Vazir* in 1722. When therefore he was obliged to retire into the Deccan in 1724, he was taking shelter in a region with which he was already quite familiar. That, however, was not the end of all his troubles, nor of those of the Emperor.

Before the Nizam reached Aurangabad, the Emperor issued orders appointing Mubariz Khan *Subahdar* of the Deccan, and called upon him to get rid of the ex-*Vazir*. But at the battle of Shakkar Kheda (11th October 1724) the unfortunate Khan perished. The victor, both by his chivalrous conduct towards his enemy and generosity to the *jagirdars* of the place, triumphed all round. The Emperor, Muhammad Shah, supinely acquiesced in the situation, and sent a rescript (20th June 1725) confirming Nizam-ul Mulk in the viceroyalty of the Deccan. "Henceforward," writes Irvine, "he (Nizam-ul Mulk) bestowed offices in the Deccan; he made promotions in rank, conferred titles, and issued assignments on the land-revenue at his own will and pleasure. The only attributes of sovereignty from which he refrained were the use of the scarlet or Imperial umbrella, the recitation of the Friday prayer (*Khutba*) in his own name, and the issue of coin stamped with his own superscription. Many astrologers had prophesied that if he chose he could sit on a throne. But he repudiated the suggestion saying: "May throne and umbrella bring good fortune to him who holds them! My business is to preserve my honour, and if this be mine, what need have I of an Imperial throne?" Yet he proved his loyalty to the throne of Aurangzeb when, thirteen years later (1738), Nadir Shah invaded India and the Marathas were challenging the Empire.

Though Nizam-ul Mulk outwardly maintained the fiction of his subordination to the titular Mughal Emperor at Delhi, he was virtually independent after 1724. That he did not stand alone in thus breaking away from the Empire is shown by the parallel conduct of the Nawabs of Oudh, Bihar and Bengal, and Rohilkhand, not to speak of other powers that were springing up in other parts of India, as we shall presently witness. Saadat Ali Khan, another *Subahdar* of the Mughal Empire, established the independent principality of Oudh also in 1724. Bihar and Bengal

followed suit, under the usurper Alivardi Khan in 1740; and Rohilkhand under Ali Muhammad four years later (1744).

The Nawabs of Oudh played a very prominent and vital role in the history of North India during this critical period. "With the exception of Asaf (Jah) Nizam-ul Mulk," writes Prof. Srivastava in *The First Two Nawabs of Oudh*, "Saadat Khan Burhan-ul Mulk was undoubtedly the ablest and most energetic of the Mughal nobles of the second quarter of the 18th century." Under the name of Mir Amin Khan Burhan-ul Mulk, he was leader of the Irani party at the Mughal Court, an opponent of the Nizam, on the one hand, and of the Saiyid brothers on the other. He was one of the chief conspirators in the assassination of Husain Ali Khan, and was on that account elevated to the rank of 5,000 *zat* and 3,000 *sawar* with the title of *Saadat Khan Bahadur* ('Lord of Good Fortune!'). From being *faujdar* of Hindaun and Biana in 1720, he rose to be Governor of Agra (1720-22) with a further increase in his rank to 6,000 *zat* and 5,000 *sawar*. After this he came under the displeasure of the Emperor, owing to his failure against the Jats and the Rajputs, and was transferred to the *Subahdari* of Oudh. But this proved his good fortune; for thereafter he acted in his new charge much like his compeer Nizam-ul Mulk in the Deccan. Not content with a provincial *Subahdari*, he appointed his nephew Safdar Jang his deputy in Oudh in 1724, and turned to the high politics of the Empire at the capital. In 1737 he defeated the Marathas near Agra. Nevertheless he failed to sustain his triumph in the face of his enemies at the Court and the counter-offensive of the indefatigable Maratha general Bajirao. When two years later Nadir Shah invaded India in 1738-9, Saadat Khan—for the sake of personal ascendancy—played a very ignominious part and finally committed suicide on 19th March 1739. He betrayed the Emperor Muhammad Shah and Nizam-ul Mulk into the hands of Nadir Shah, as we shall presently see, and left the Empire "bleeding and prostrate". In this respect the character of Saadat Khan was in striking contrast to that of the noble Asaf Jah who stood by the Emperor through thick and thin.

The story of the eastern provinces of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa may be very briefly told. The last time that these parts of the Empire were well governed was when, after the death of Aurangzeb (1707), Murshid Quli Khan was Governor of Bengal (1713). His abilities and honesty brought to him the additional charge of Orissa in 1719. His efficient administration, love of justice, and strict enforcement of the law, as Jadunath Sarkar has pointed out,

"increased the wealth and happiness of the people and fostered the growth of trade in the country". He was followed by his son-in-law Suja-ud-daulah Asad Jang in 1727. In his time Bihar was added to the *subahs* of Bengal and Orissa in 1733. The three provinces continued to prosper till the time of Suja's successor, Sarfaraz Khan, who took charge of them in 1739. But he proved so licentious in his character that he was soon got rid of by his deputy at Patna, Alivardi Khan, who slew him and usurped the office, on 10th April 1740. That such a rebellious officer could still carry on within the Empire with the connivance, nay the support, of the Emperor was due to two circumstances: (i) the utter weakness of the nominal sovereign, and (ii) the helplessness of the Mughal Empire in the face of external invaders like Nadir Shah, and internal enemies like the Jats and the Marathas.

5. *The Irani and Durrani Invaders*

Nadir Shah was a Turkish adventurer who had lately usurped power in Iran and was bent on aggrandisement all round. Early in 1737 he marched on Qandahar with an army of 80,000 men and captured it after a siege which lasted for one year—from March 1737 to March 1738. His policy, as Irvine has stated, was to tempt the Afghans to surrender to him, by creating a reputation for himself as a merciful enemy and liberal master, and to enlist the Afghan tribesmen under his banner as devoted supporters of his projected conquests in Central Asia and India. So he treated the garrison kindly. Then he started diplomatic manoeuvres with the Mughal Emperor at Delhi. But thanks to the ineptitude of this worthless descendant of Aurangzeb and the factiousness of the courtiers at the Imperial capital, Nadir Shah's overtures were treated with indifference. This, combined with the utter weakness of the Mughal Governor at Kabul, provoked as well as tempted the ambitious 'Napoleon of Iran' to make a forced entry into the Punjab. "Nadir Shah," writes Irvine, "was no mere soldier, no savage leader of a savage horde, but a master of diplomacy and statecraft as well as of the sword. The profoundness of his diplomacy was no less remarkable than the greatness of his generalship in war, and the wisdom of his policy to the vanquished after his victories in the field." Unfortunately the experience of India during his invasion showed that he was not always merciful or considerate to the conquered.

The Persians entered northern Afghanistan on 10th May 1738; Ghazni fell on the 31st of the same month. Kabul was occupied on 19th June. He pretended to the Mughal

Emperor that, by punishing the rebellious Afghans, he was only serving the best interests of the Indian Empire. Nevertheless, he captured Jalalabad on 7th September. Several people were massacred and the women taken captive "by way of reprisals against the assassination of his envoys". Peshawar surrendered on 18th November 1738, and Lahore fell on 8th January 1739. The further progress of events may be narrated in the words of the contemporary chronicler Anandram Mukhlis. He writes in his *Tazkira*:

Nadir Shah was now in possession of all the country as far as Attock, and Muhammad Shah and his advisers could no longer remain blind to the danger that threatened them. They understood that this was no ordinary foe against whom they had to contend, no mere plunderer who would be sated with the spoils of a province and then return to his own country, but a leader of unshakable resolution who shaped his course with his sword... How to relate the ruin and desolation (he continues) that overwhelmed this beautiful country! Wazirabad, Imanabad and Gujarat, towns which for population may almost be called cities, were levelled with the earth. Nothing was respected, no sort of violence remained unpractised; property of all kinds became the spoil of the plunderer, and women the prey of the ravisher.

A fateful battle was fought with the Imperial army near Karnal on 13th February 1739. Though the forces under Khan Dauran fought very bravely and the Amir-ul Umara laid down his life on the stricken field, it was the invader who won the day. "Had the Emperor himself led his powerful army to the support of Burhan-ul Mulk", Anandram opines, "there would have been no cause to lament...; and who can say that victory might not have smiled on his face?" "It is probable", states the *Bayan-i Waqi*, "that if the army of Hindusthan had been fully provided with artillery, the Persians might not have been able to oppose it." Other witnesses bear testimony to the utter scarcity of provisions in the Mughal camp. That might have brought about the collapse more than anything else. A Maratha eye-witness reported: "Grain could not be procured even at 6 or 7 rupees a *seer*; the country was a desert, nothing could be had from the neighbouring villages."

Bad as the position was after the military defeat, treachery paved the way for greater disasters in the sequel. The dying Khan Dauran had desperately implored: "Never take the Emperor to Nadir, nor conduct Nadir to Delhi, but send away that evil from this point by any means that you can devise." Nevertheless, Fate willed otherwise. Though Nizam-ul Mulk had persuaded the victor to depart on the

promise of a payment of 50 *lakhs* of rupees, the traitor Saadat Khan (Burhan-ul Mulk), who was an enemy of the Nizam, prevailed upon Nadir Shah to secure the person of both Nizam-ul Mulk and the Emperor, and to march to Delhi, holding out hopes of a larger booty. Consequently, roundly blaming Muhammad Shah for his many lapses, Nadir Shah declared: "Only as your indolence and pride have obliged me to march so far, and I have been put to an extraordinary expense, and my men, on account of the long marches, are much fatigued and in want of necessities, I must go to Delhi and there continue for some days until the army is refreshed and the *peshkash* (tribute) of 50 *lakhs* promised by the Nizam is made good to me. After that I shall leave you to look after your own affairs". The forced visitation of the victor to Delhi culminated in a holocaust which Anandram has thus graphically described:

On the morning of Sunday, 11th March 1739, an order went forth from the Persian Emperor for the slaughter of the inhabitants (by way of reprisals for the alleged murder of some of his men by some of the infuriated citizens). The result may be imagined: one moment would seem to have sufficed for universal destruction. The Chandni Chowk, the fruit market, the Daribah Bazar, and the buildings around the Masjid-i-Jama were set fire to and reduced to ashes. The inhabitants, one and all, were slaughtered. Here and there some opposition was offered, but in most places people were butchered unresistingly. The Persians laid violent hands on everything and everybody; cloth, jewels, dishes of gold and silver, were all acceptable spoil. The author beheld these horrors from his mansion situated in the Vakilpura *muhalla* outside the city, resolved to fight to the last if necessary, and with the help of God to fall at last with honour. But, the Lord be praised! the work of destruction did not extend beyond the above named parts of the capital. Since the days of Hazrat Sahib-kiran Amir Timur, who captured Delhi and ordered the inhabitants to be massacred, up to the present day—a period of 348 years—the capital had been free from such visitations. The ruin in which its beautiful streets and buildings were now involved was such that the labour of years could alone restore the town to its former state of grandeur.

Finally, "all the regal jewels and property, and the contents of the treasury, were seized by the Persian conqueror in the citadel. He thus became possessed of treasure to the amount of 60 *lakhs* of rupees and several thousand *ashrafs*; plate of gold to the value of one *crore* of rupees, and the jewels, many of which were unrivalled in beauty by any

in the world, were valued at about 50 *crores*. The Peacock Throne alone, constructed at great pains in the reign of Shah Jahan, had cost one *crore* of rupees. Elephants, horses, and precious stuffs, whatever pleased the conqueror's eye, more indeed than can be enumerated, became his spoil. In short, the accumulated wealth of 348 years changed masters in a moment."

After 57 days' stay, Nadir Shah departed on 5th May 1739, placing the crown again on the head of Muhammad Shah. The restored Emperor declared: "As the generosity of the *Shah-in-Shah* has made me a second time master of a crown and a throne and exalted me among the crowned heads of the world, I beg to offer him as my tribute the provinces of my Empire west of the river Indus, from Kashmir to Sind, and in addition the *subahs* of Thatta and the ports subordinate to it." The Governor of Lahore signed an agreement to send 20 *lakhs* of rupees to Nadir Shah annually, "to remove the reason for any Persian garrison being placed east of the Indus". He also begged the conqueror to release all the Indians who had been taken captive for removal to Persia.

The next invader of India was Ahmad Shah Durrani, or Abdali, who was a general under Nadir Shah. Of him the great conqueror had said: "I have not found in Iran, Turan or Hind, any man equal to Ahmad Abdali in capacity and character." He was an Afghan, and when Nadir Shah was assassinated, eight years after his return from India, he made himself master of Kabul and Kandahar and laid claim to the Western Punjab. Like Babur, he led a series of expeditions into the Punjab, from 1748 to 1761, which culminated in the Third Battle of Panipat. During these fourteen fateful years, as we have noted, three monarchs came to be crowned: viz., Ahmad Shah (1748-54), Alamgir II (1754-59), and Shah Alam II (1759-1806). Under these worthless rulers, "the pillars of the State were daily shaken; the Emperor never inquired about the realm, the soldiery or the treasury—the three foundations of an Empire". The hereditary nobles were humiliated, and Javid Khan, a eunuch of the *harem*, dominated the scene. "Never since Timur's time", writes a contemporary, "had a eunuch exercised such power in the State; hence the Government became unsettled." Ahmad Shah was dethroned, blinded and put in prison. When he was dying of thirst, the officer-in-charge held out to his lips some dirty water on a potsherd, and the helpless Padishah felt grateful for this small mercy! His successor, Alamgir II, met with an end which was even more pathetic: he was murdered, and his naked body was unceremoniously thrown on the bank of the

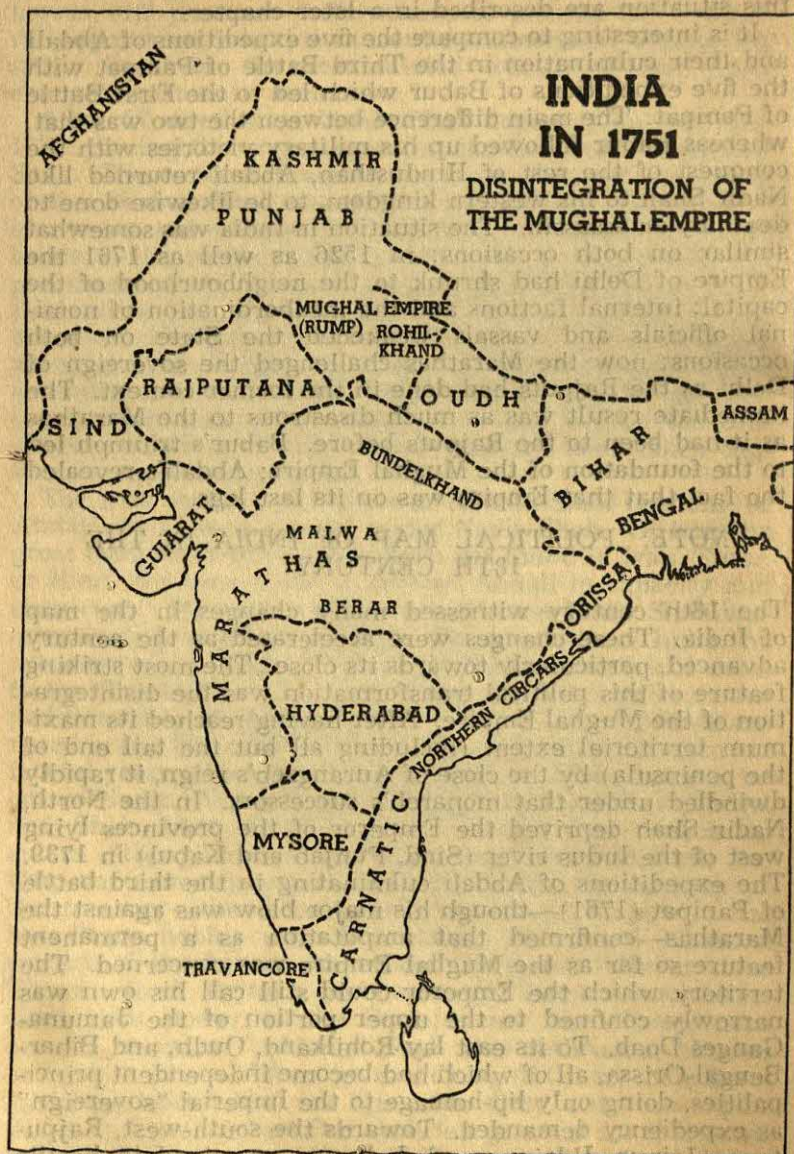
Jamūna in 1759. His son Ali Gauhar, Shah Alam II, was an exile from his capital until 1772 and a plaything in the hands of the English and the Marathas. Further details of this situation are described in a later chapter.

It is interesting to compare the five expeditions of Abdali and their culmination in the Third Battle of Panipat with the five expeditions of Babur which led to the First Battle of Panipat. The main difference between the two was that, whereas Babur followed up his military victories with the conquest of the rest of Hindusthan, Abdali returned like Nadir Shah to his western kingdom, to be likewise done to death by an assassin. The situation in India was somewhat similar on both occasions: in 1526 as well as 1761 the Empire of Delhi had shrunk to the neighbourhood of the capital; internal factions and the insubordination of nominal officials and vassals weakened the State on both occasions; now the Marathas challenged the sovereign of Delhi as the Rajputs had done in the former context. The immediate result was as much disastrous to the Marathas as it had been to the Rajputs before. Babur's triumph led to the foundation of the Mughal Empire; Abdali's revealed the fact that that Empire was on its last legs.

NOTE: POLITICAL MAP OF INDIA IN THE 18TH CENTURY

The 18th century witnessed many changes in the map of India. These changes were accelerated as the century advanced, particularly towards its close. The most striking feature of this political transformation was the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. After having reached its maximum territorial extent (including all but the tail end of the peninsula) by the close of Aurangzeb's reign, it rapidly dwindled under that monarch's successors. In the North, Nadir Shah deprived the Emperor of the provinces lying west of the Indus river (Sind, Punjab and Kabul) in 1739. The expeditions of Abdali culminating in the third battle of Panipat (1761)—though his major blow was against the Marathas—confirmed that amputation as a permanent feature so far as the Mughal Empire was concerned. The territory which the Emperor could still call his own was narrowly confined to the upper portion of the Jamuna-Ganges Doab. To its east lay Rohilkand, Oudh, and Bihar-Bengal-Orissa, all of which had become independent principalities, doing only lip-homage to the Imperial "sovereign" as expediency demanded. Towards the south-west, Rajputana (Jaipur, Udaipur and Jodhpur) remained in hostile isolation, the Emperor being too helpless to command their allegiance. Gujarat farther down, in the west, was nomi-

nally under a Mughal Governor until its subjugation by the Marathas. This power under Baji Rao I (1720-40) started on a career of northward expansion, and very soon



either conquered or dominated Gujarat, Rajputana, Malwa, Bundelkhand, Orissa and the borders of Bengal—exacting

chauith and *sardeshmukhi*, either with or without the Emperor's formal consent. Agra, Ajmer, Lucknow, Allahabad, Patna, and Bengal were not immune from these exactions. Outside the spheres of their activities, the Nizam ruled over the central and eastern Deccan, claiming hegemony over the Northern Sarkars (Andhra) and the Carnatic down to Tanjore. The last was a Maratha possession. Travancore, Cochin and Mysore shared between them what was left of the peninsula, with the Carnatic (under the Nawab of Arcot) on the east, and the Maratha and the Nizam's Dominions on the north. The French and the English were beginning to eat their way into the political patchwork of India in the eighteenth century. (See map on page 186.)

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PART TWO

MARATHA SUPREMACY

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PREPARATION

1. Introduction. 2. Islam in the South. 3. The Heritage of the Hindus. 4. The Religious Revival. 5. The Training in Arms. 6. Mughal Imperialism in the Deccan. 7. A Southern Interlude.

1. Introduction

THE IMMEDIATE inheritors of the political supremacy of the Mughals in India were not the English but the Marathas. The failure to recognise this historical fact has been responsible for the comparative neglect of the Marathas as an independent power in text-books of Indian history. Most writers have passed on from "Muslim India" to "British India"—as does for example, *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*—thereby subordinating the Marathas to the supremacy of their predecessors and successors, and denying to them their legitimate place in history. It is true that the Marathas never ruled from Delhi as *de jure* sovereigns, and there was a Mughal "Emperor" at the Imperial capital even after the Maratha supremacy was overthrown. But *de facto* power in the Empire was exercised by the Marathas before it was inherited by the English; the Emperor was a Maratha puppet before the English acquired power over him. Poona was the real political capital of India before it was outrivalled by Calcutta. It was only after the overthrow of the Marathas that the English became undisputed masters of our country.

Another cause of the subordinate place assigned to the Marathas by historians is the general neglect of southern history. Indian history has always—or too often—been considered from the northern angle. The Deccan and South India have been looked upon as mere pastures of North Indian rulers, whether they were Hindus or Muslims. Hence Samudragupta and Ala-ud-din Khalji have come in for more prominent notice than Raja Raja Chola or Rajendra Chola and the Peshvas. Even Shivaji has attracted attention more as a politically romantic hero than as a nation-builder. The facts, however, are that the Cholas were as Imperialistic as the Guptas and contributed as much, if not more, to the administrative organisation and general advancement and prosperity of India as did the northern rulers. The Marathas dominated northern India

for a longer period and their hold over it, was more real than that of the Sultans of Delhi over the South. Likewise, Vijayanagar and the Marathas played a more effective part in stemming the tide of the Muslim advance than did the Rajputs and the Sikhs. Their service in the conservation of the purely Hindu civilisation and traditions was more fruitful than that of the northern defenders. Modern India is the product of the doings of the people of the South not less than of the people of the North. It is also the resultant of the interaction of the Hindu and Muslim cultures. In the foregoing pages we have mainly dwelt on the history of the Muslims of North India. We shall now deal with their advance into the southern peninsula and its results and reactions more largely from the point of view of the Hindus. For this purpose it will be convenient to trace briefly the history of the Muslim conquest of the Deccan and South India as a preliminary to the assessment of its consequences in the South as compared with those in the North.

2. *Islam in the South*

The Muslims first entered the Deccan and South India as traders and missionaries, long before their conquest of these regions. During this period of peaceful penetration, under the Rashtrakutas (9th century A.D.), far from evoking hostile reactions, they were welcomed and patronised by the Hindu monarchs. The Arab traveller Suleiman, for instance, has recorded that "In the whole country of the Hindus there is none more affectionate to the Arabs than Balhara (Amoghavarsha Rashtrakuta, A.D. 815-78); and likewise his subjects also profess the same love for the Arabs". But with the advent of the Turkish Sultans of Delhi, the relations between the foreigners and the natives no longer remained cordial on account of the aggressive and fanatical policies pursued by the invaders. Ala-ud-din Khalji led his first expedition into the Deccan on Saturday, 26th February 1295. The Yadava ruler of Devagiri (Ramdev-rao) could defend neither his capital nor his kingdom, and the victor was only encouraged by his easy triumph. We learn from the contemporary chronicler, Barani, that Ala-ud-din carried away with him "an unprecedented amount of booty". Naturally, this was followed up by five more expeditions of the Khalji generals—Malik Kafur and Malik Khusrav*—in the course of the twenty-five years, 1295-1320. Warangal, the Andhra capital, fell in 1309, and

* They were really Hindu converts to Islam, serving under the Khaljis.

Dvarasamudra (in Mysore) capitulated the very next year. Malik Kafur overran Ma'bar (Madura) and reached the tip of the peninsula in 1310-11. There was no fresh annexation under the Khaljis; Ala-ud-din's successor Mubarak and his general Malik Khusrav merely repeated the performances of their predecessors, suppressing revolts and exacting tribute. The task of political consolidation and assimilation was undertaken by the Tughlaqs (1320-47), Ghiyas-ud-din and Muhammad. It was for the more effective realisation of this objective that the last named Sultan made his famous experiment of shifting the capital of the Empire to Daulatabad (Dhargiri) in the Deccan (1326-27). These efforts resulted in the creation of fairly large colonies of Muslims in the South—through transplantation and conversions—and the continuation of the Delhi dominion in the Deccan during the next two decades. Ultimately the task proved impossible; Delhi was too distant, communications were too difficult, and even the Muslims of the South too recalcitrant. The more remotely situated Ma'bar was the first to revolt (1335), though it was under a Muslim Governor (Saiyid Jalal-ud-din). The Hindus organised themselves under the leadership of Krishna Nayak and Vira Ballal, and finally succeeded in founding in 1336, an independent State, Vijayanagar, whose fortunes we shall describe a little later. The Muslims of the Deccan also followed suit and established the Bahmani Sultanate in 1347 under the leadership of Zafar Khan. He was proclaimed Sultan at Gulbarga with the title of Ala-ud-din Hasan Shah Bahmani, on 9th September 1347. Thus, fifty-two years after the first Ala-ud-din (Khalji) had begun his subjugation of the Deccan, a second Ala-ud-din (Bahmani) liberated the South from the domination of Delhi. Not until the time of Akbar (1591) was any attempt made by the rulers of the North to recover this lost hegemony.

At this time there were three Muslim kingdoms in the South: (i) Khandesh in the Tapti valley; (ii) Bahmani in the Deccan, and (iii) Madura in the Tamil country. Of these, Madura was soon absorbed by Vijayanagar (c.1378). Bahmani continued to flourish for 137 years (1347-1484), after which it rapidly resolved itself into five independent Sultanates: Berar (1484), Bijapur (1489), Ahmadnagar (1498), Golkonda (1518), and Bidar (1526). The last of the Bahmani Sultans, Kalimulla, sought Babur's assistance in vain against his own insurgent nobles. He died a fugitive in 1538, and his son "preferred a pilgrimage to Mecca to the palace dungeon of Bidar" and we hear no more of him. In fact, as Meadows Taylor wrote, with the assassination

of Mahmud Gawan (the greatest of the Bahmani statesmen) in 1481, "departed all the cohesion and power of the Bahmani kingdom". Khandesh had become independent in 1388 on the death of Firuz Tughlaq, and it was extinguished by Akbar in 1601.

Of the succession States of the Bahmani kingdom, Berar was absorbed by Ahmadnagar in 1574, and Bidar was annexed by Bijapur in 1609. The Nizamshahi of Ahmadnagar continued its independent existence until 1636; the Adilshahi of Bijapur until 1686; and the Qutbshahi of Golkonda until 1687. The absorption of all these within the Mughal Empire took place in the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. The internal history of these provincial kingdoms is of little interest to us; its importance lies only in its bearing on the situation as a whole. On the one hand we have to note the effects of Muslim rule on the peoples of the South, and on the other to study the repercussions of the happenings in the South upon the Imperialists of the North. We shall first look into the reactions of the Hindus.

3. *The Heritage of the Hindus*

The results of the Islamic conquest of India and of other countries were not identical. For instance, in Egypt, Afghanistan and Persia, though local elements were assimilated by the conquerors, the original cultures were totally overwhelmed and these countries became a permanent and integral part of the Islamic world. Not so India. North India was totally conquered and a large number of its inhabitants converted to Islam. The Muslims ruled over the land for several centuries continuously. Yet India remained very largely the land of the Hindus. No more than a fourth part of its population came to profess the religion of the Prophet of Arabia. And even among these Indian Muslims, the traces of their Hindu heritage have survived to a degree that makes certain sections of them hardly distinguishable from Hindus. This capacity of Hindu civilisation for survival, in spite of long political subjection, is a historical phenomenon which needs the closest study for its proper appreciation. Summarily, we might state that it has been the outcome of (i) the inherent appeal of the fundamentals of Hinduism to the vast majority of the people of this country; (ii) the services rendered to the people by the institution of caste (with all its obvious defects) and the village communities; and (iii) the organised political resistance, chiefly of the Rajputs and the Marathas. Outside these two groups, the creators of the Vijayanagar Empire played a very vital role. Reserving non-political aspects for later consideration, we shall here briefly review

the history of Hindu resistance to Muslim conquest, first in the North, then in the South.

The origin of the Rajputs is a subject of great controversy. We shall here understand by that term all the rulers of Hindusthan (i.e. North India) who participated in the prolonged struggle against the advance of the Muslim invaders. After the establishment of Arab rule in Sind and Multan, early in the eighth century A.D., there was an interval of about three centuries before the Turks entered India through the North-Western passes under Mahmud of Ghazni (A.D. 1000). During this interval the Gurjara-Pratiharas acted as a strong bulwark against the immediate extension of Muslim conquests. Their place was next taken by the Shahi rulers of Kabul who held the outposts of Hindu India in Afghanistan. Jaipal and Anandapal, who organised a confederacy against the Ghaznavid conqueror, belonged to this dynasty. But their resistance proved futile against the intrepid Turks who swept the western provinces of North India, and permanently annexed the Punjab west of the Indus to the dominions of the conquering Crescent. Another two centuries passed, and under Muhammad Ghuri and his Slaves the Muslims were firmly planted as rulers of Delhi (A.D. 1206). The heroism of Prithviraj Chauhan was neutralised by the suicidal factionousness of Jaichandra Kachwah, and both fell victims to the more determined Turks. Before the thirteenth century drew to its close, the whole of North India was in the firm grip of its new masters, and the Rajputs were driven into the desert, which became their permanent home, whence they zealously guarded what was left of Hindu power in the North. Two more heroic efforts were made by the Rajputs under the gallant leadership of the Sisodias of Mewar: once by Rana Sanga (Sangrama Simha) against Babur in the battle of Khanua (1527), and then by Rana Pratap Simha against Akbar in the battle of Haldighat (or Gogunda) in 1576. Ultimately the chivalrous defenders of Hinduism succumbed to the sagacious Imperialism of the Mughal Emperors. So complete was their surrender to the superior power of the Imperial Mughals, that, even when the enticing liberalism of Akbar was replaced by the challenging bigotry of Aurangzeb, Delhi could depend upon a Jai Singh to defend the power of Islam against Shivaji, the noblest champion of Hinduism. The South produced more pertinacious protectors of the heritage of the Hindus than did the North.

The initial results of the impact of Islam in the Deccan were unfortunate. Ala-ud-din Khalji overwhelmed the Yadavas in the course of a bare twentyfive days, and about

twentyfive years later Odoricus (a foreign traveller) observed that the Hindus of the South were "now subject to the Emperor of Delhi". (Yule's *Cathay*). The disastrous consequences of that subjection were, as Sewell summed it up: "Everything seemed to be leading up to but one inevitable end—the ruin and devastation of the Hindu provinces, the annihilation of their old royal houses, the destruction of their religion, their temples and their cities. All that the dwellers in the South held most dear seemed tottering to its fall". A contemporary record described the tragedy in more poignant terms:

After the death of Prataparudra the earth was engulfed in the ocean of darkness of the Turushka rule. *Adharma*, which had been kept under control until then by that virtuous monarch, flourished under them unchecked, as the existing conditions were favourable for its growth. The cruel wretches put the rich to torture for the sake of their wealth; many of their victims died of terror at the sight of their vicious countenances. The Brahmanas were compelled to abandon their religious practices; the images of the gods were overthrown and smashed to pieces; the learned were deprived of the *agharas* which had been in the possession of their families from time immemorial; the peasants were despoiled of the fruits of their toil, and their families were impoverished and ruined. None dared lay claim to anything, whether it was a piece of property or one's own wife. To those despicable wretches, wine was the ordinary drink, beef the staple food, and slaying the Brahmana the favourite pastime. The land of Telingana, left without a protector, suffered destruction from the Mussalmans like a forest subjected to a devastating wild fire.*

The rise of Vijayanagar was a reaction against these conditions. Provincial writers have attributed the origin of this great dominion to either the Andhras or the Kannadigas exclusively. But Ferishta is more historically correct in stating: "Belal Deo (of Mysore) and Krishna Nayak (of Warangal) both combined their forces and delivered Ma'bar and Dwarasamudra, which had been for years in the past tributaries of the ruler of Carnatic, from Muslim control." The function of the new Empire founded by the "sons of Sangama" is stated by a local inscription to be the "protection of *Dharma*". That this was fulfilled in no narrow sense is borne out by the testimony of Duarte Barbosa (1504-14), a Portuguese visitor, who noted: "The

* *Bharati*, xix, p.311—cited by Venkatramanya, *The Early Muslim Expansion in South India*, pp.164-67.

King allows such freedom that every man may come and go and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance, and without inquiry whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or Heathen. Great equity and justice is observed by all." Rev. H. Heras does not exaggerate when he remarks: "Vijayanagar... stood as the bulwark of Hinduism for more than two and a half centuries. In the protection it afforded to Hindu culture, the encouragement it gave to art and literature, the fostering care with which it looked after the prosperity of its subjects, many times harassed, often beaten, though always holding their own against the Muhammadans, Vijayanagar affords a noble example of a great Empire."

The Empire was founded in 1336 and destroyed in 1565, at the battle of Rakkastangadi (or Talikota), by a combination of the three survivors of the Bahmani kingdom—Ahmadnagar, Golkonda and Bijapur. It reached its climax under Krishnadeva Raya (1509-30). He was a contemporary of Babur who spoke of him as "the most powerful of the Pagan princes in point of territory and army". Domingo Paes (another Portuguese visitor to the Empire) described Vijayanagar as "the best provided city in the world", and the King as "one that seeks to honour foreigners" and "receives them kindly, asking about all their affairs, whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, gallant and perfect in all things, but subject to sudden fits of rage".

The Marathas were the spiritual and political successors to this great tradition of Vijayanagar. For them 'the glory that was Vijayanagar' was not a mere memory: it was a vital source of inspiration. Shivaji was in fact the inheritor of the Rajput tradition of the Sisodias on the one hand, and the Karnatak tradition of Vijayanagar on the other.

4. The Religious Revival

Religion has always been a source of great inspiration in India, not to speak of its influence among other peoples. The Islamic aggression in this country—though it had sordid impulses behind it like the greed of Mahmud Ghazni—also found a powerful driving force in religion. *Jihad* was a convenient slogan for some of the Sultans, while others were sincerely desirous of converting the 'home of the Infidels' (*dar-ul-harb*) into the 'land of the Faithful' (*dar-ul-Islam*). In the wake of war and political domination by the Muslims, therefore, inevitably came the destruction of idols and temples, the conversion of Hindus to Islam to the extent it was found feasible, and the imposition of the *jiziya*. Despite the regular manifestation of this tech-

nique of Muslim conquest, however, the objectives of most of the Sultans were more economic and political than purely religious. Yet, while kings fought for these stakes, the effects of their sanguinary activities upon the masses were essentially religious and cultural. It took time for Hindu society to organise itself for effective resistance and recovery. But that struggle for survival was preceded and assisted by a great religious awakening which was revivalist and reformist at one and the same time. While in the North such a movement—as illustrated by Kabir and Nanak, Chaitanya and Mira Bai—seemed to stop short with social results, in Maharashtra and the South, generally, it galvanised the Hindus more thoroughly and led to important political consequences. Just as Vidyaranya stimulated and blessed the rise of Vijayanagar in the fourteenth century, a galaxy of saints and teachers leavened the Maratha people during the three centuries that preceded the establishment of Maratha dominion by Shivaji.

The Deccan was the scene of intense religious activities even at the moment it was invaded by the forces of Ala-ud-din Khalji. As illustrations of the major trends we might cite the works of Chakradhara, Dnaneshvar and Hemadri. All three of them died during the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The *Siddhanta-sutra-patha* contains the teachings of the first, the *Bhavartha-dipika* or *Dnaneshvari* of the second, and the *Chaturvarga-chintamani* of the third. Hemadri belonged to the orthodox school, Dnaneshvar to the intellectually emancipated, and Chakradhara represented the heretical reformer. While the ritual-ridden *Chintamani* prescribed no fewer than 2,000 ceremonials to be performed by the Brahmans during the year, the *Dnaneshvari* probed beneath the externals of religion and penetrated to its very core: "The plumage of a peacock," it said, "is covered all over with eyes, but it lacks vision!" Chakradhara questioned the sanctity of the Vedas, rejected ritualism, and denounced the caste-system and untouchability. Hemadri wrote in Sanskrit, but the other two were champions of the vernaculars. The Mahanubhava cult founded by Chakradhara, as well as the intellectual and devotional teachings of Dnanadev (as Dnaneshvar is popularly known), inaugurated a Democracy of the Devotees which had far-reaching effects in the history of Maharashtra.

The saints and teachers of Maharashtra came from all classes of society. Gora was a potter, Savanta a gardener, Narahari a goldsmith, Sena a barber, Chokha a mahar (Harijan), Namadev a tailor, and Tukaram a petty trader. There were also among them women like Sakhubai and

Janabai who were maidservants and Kanhopatra a courtesan. All of them wrote or sang in the language of the masses, and they were fired with a religious fervour which thrills us even today as we listen to their *abhangs* or devotional songs. "I shall sing the praises of God," says Tukaram, the greatest of the popular saints of Maharashtra, "and gather together His saints. I shall evoke tears even from stones. I shall sing the holy name of God and dance and clap my hands with joy. I shall plant my feet on the brow of death... I have discovered for you the path across the ocean of life. Come hither, come hither; come great and small; men and women. Take no thought and have no anxiety: I shall carry you all to the other shore. I bear with me certitude to carry you over in God's name!" Such an appeal went straight into the hearts of the people. As Namadev declared: "The people, having found the Yavanas (Muslims) unendurable, are singing the praises of God: for these are ever the means of our redemption."

Pandharpur, on the river Bhima, was the spiritual capital of Maharashtra. There, at the shrine of Vithoba (an incarnation of Vishnu), gathered the devotees from all parts of the country, singing *bhajans* and performing *kirtans* (songs and sermons). They tramped on foot over long distances, thereby disseminating the message of the great Pandharpur movement. "*Dnanadev-Tukaram, Dnanoba-Takaram!*" was on the lips of everyone. "The value and significance of this movement," writes Rev. MacNicol, "lie in its affirmation of the claims of the human heart and in the moral and religious consequences that follow from that affirmation. These are the elements in it that gave it its power and enabled it to make an appeal so far-reaching and so profound. It was, if we may say so, a splendid effort of the Hindu soul to break the bondage under which it had lain so long. It at last stirred in its long sleep, and turned its drowsy eyes towards the dawn."

The diversion of this emotional flood into constructive social channels was the work of Ramdas who organised an army of devotees and dotted the country with his *mathas* (monasteries). The God he worshipped was no longer the static Vithoba of Pandharpur, but the dynamic Maruti. The appellation *Samarth* (the powerful) prefixed to his name indicated his self-confidence and power. "Ramdas, more than any other saint of Maharashtra," writes Prof. R. D. Ranade, "called people's minds to the performance of Duty while the heart was to be set on God... No wonder that with this teaching he helped the formation of the Maratha kingdom, as no other saint had done before." His rallying cry was: "Places of pilgrimage have been dese-

crated; homes of the Brahmanas have been destroyed; the entire earth is agitated; *Dharma* is gone. Hence the Marathas should be mobilised; *Maharashtra Dharma* should be propagated. The people should be rallied and filled with a singleness of purpose; sparing no effort, we should crash upon the Mlenchhas." Shivaji made full use of this mighty socio-religious force. But to understand how he could do that we must trace the background in which his ancestors and people gathered political experience and received the necessary training in arms.

5. The Training in Arms

V. K. Rajwade, the great historian of Maharashtra, described the transformation in the outlook of the Marathas, brought about by the above described forces, as from *sahishnu* (meek submission) to *jayishnu* (victorious aggression). This metamorphosis was possible because, though Maharashtra was temporarily overwhelmed by the invaders, the basic character of the people was not altogether sheepish. It is an inherent defect of centralised monarchy that the States governed by it stand or fall according to the character of their kings. The capitulation of the Yadavas, therefore, was not a total surrender by the people. As a matter of fact, the gallant resistance to the Khaljis offered by Shankardev and Harpaldev (the son and son-in-law respectively of Ramdevrao) indicated that the ineptitude was of the head of the State alone. The Deccanis still bore the martial character given them by Huen Tsang in the seventh century A.D. They were "proud, spirited and warlike, grateful for favours and revengeful for wrongs, self-sacrificing towards suppliants in distress, and sanguinary to death with any who treated them insultingly". That character only needed opportunities for its exercise under proper leadership. We obtain several glimpses of its manifestation even during the dark days of subjection to the Muslim conquerors. For instance, in 1327, when Baha-ud-din Garshasp rebelled against Muhammad bin Tughlaq, he was chivalrously protected by the Hindu Raja of Kampli, whose family was ruthlessly wiped out as a consequence by the Sultan of Delhi. Likewise, Nag-nak the brave Koli chieftain of Kondhana (Simhagad) held out stubbornly for eight months against the forces of the Tughlaq, and repulsed the besiegers with heavy losses (according to Ferishta) until he was starved into surrender by a severe blockade. Under the Bahmanis, too, Malik-u't-Tujjar (1347) and Mahmud Gawan (1469)—both veteran generals—met with humiliating reverses at the hands of the reckless defenders of the Konkan tracts. The Sultans soon realised the utility

of these people and wisely employed them in their armies in large numbers. "In this way," writes Gribble, "there gradually grew up a hardy race of mountaineers, always the best stuff for soldiers, who, brought up in their own faith and traditions, were yet taught the art of war by their conquerors, and only awaited a time of danger and of weakness to raise the standard of revolt and assert their own independence. This was in fact the origin of the Maratha nation, and the Sultans of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar may be said to have educated and brought into existence the nation which, before long, was to take not only their places, but very nearly to acquire the sovereignty of India."

The truth of these observations is corroborated by Indian writers as well. "The chief importance of the Deccan campaigns of the Mughals," notes Dr. Beni Prasad, "lies in the opportunities of military training and political power which they afforded to the Marathas. Malik Ambar, who was as great a master of the art of guerilla warfare as Shivaji himself, stands at the head of the builders of the Maratha nationality. His primary object was to serve the interest of his own master, but unconsciously he nourished into strength a power which more than avenged the injuries of the south on the northern power." M. G. Ranade the patriotic Maratha historian also observes: "Thus was the ground prepared partly by nature, partly by the ancient history of the country, partly by the religious revival, but chiefly by the long discipline in arms which the country had undergone under Mahomedan rule for three hundred years."

6. *Mughal Imperialism in the Deccan**

We observed before that the link between the Deccan and the North which was snapped by the establishment of the Bahmani Sultanate in 1347 was not restored until the time of Akbar in 1591. In that year, the Mughal Emperor sent diplomatic missions to the courts of all the Sultans in the Deccan: Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, Golkonda and Bijapur. Of these, the ruler of Khandesh alone allowed himself to be drawn into the Imperial net; the rest were in no hurry to oblige Akbar. Consequently, Abul Fazl described Raza Ali Khan (Sultan of Khandesh) as "a man of great talent, just, wise, prudent and brave". The chief importance of his territory lay in the fact that it included the mighty fortress of Asirgarh commanding the main road into the Deccan,

* This subject has been dealt with in fuller detail from the Mughal angle in the earlier part of this book. Here the main points are restated in terms of the history of the Deccan for the sake of convenience.

which, in the estimation of V. A. Smith, was "one of the strongest and best equipped fortresses in Europe or Asia". The rest of the story may be briefly told.

There was no love lost between the Sultans of the South. The Bahmani kingdom had gone into dissolution because of internal factions. There was perpetual strife between the Deccani and foreign Muslims (Persians, Abyssinians, Turks, Arabs, etc.). The temporary union which had been brought about for the destruction of Vijayanagar in 1565 did not last long. When Burhan-ul-Mulk of Ahmadnagar died in 1594, his son Ibrahim was challenged and killed on the battle-field by the forces of Bijapur. In the succession disputes which followed, one of the parties invited intervention by the Mughals. "Prince Murad, having previously received orders from his father Akbar, to march into the Deccan, gladly embraced the proposal and moved with great expedition to the south."

The heroic defence of Ahmadnagar, first by Chand Bibi and afterwards by Malik Ambar, constituted a noble prelude to the epic struggle against Mughal Imperialism under Shivaji. At one critical stage in the siege of Ahmadnagar (November 1595), Chand Bibi appeared with a veil on her head. She had guns turned on the assailants and stones hurled on them, so that they were repulsed in several repeated attacks. During the night she stood by the workmen and caused the breach to be filled up 9 feet before daybreak with wood, stones, earth and carcases. Nevertheless, the Nizamshahi capital fell into the hands of Akbar, in August 1600 after a stiff resistance. "Chand Bibi, the only capable leader", records the Mughal historian, "was either murdered or took poison." Akbar had already occupied Burhanpur (capital of Khandesh) on 31st March 1600. He captured Asirgarh on 17th January, 1601 and proclaimed himself "Emperor of the Deccan". He also secured an Adilshahi bride for his son Daniyal (1604) after whom Khandesh was rechristened Dandesh.

The struggle, however, was resumed by Malik Ambar, the valiant Abyssinian minister and general of Ahmadnagar. He was a far-sighted statesman and intrepid fighter, fired by a singleness of purpose and determination 'never to submit or yield'. He was sincerely loyal to the State and resourceful in his tactics, and as already observed, he afforded the Marathas their first valuable training in arms. He wisely attempted to co-operate with the Adil Shah of Bijapur, saying: "It is my design to fight the Mughal troops so long as there is life in my body"—recalling the vow of Sher Shah Sur though not his good fortune. He reached the climax of his career when he defeated the combined

forces of Bijapur and the Mughals in October 1624 at the battle of Bhatavadi (10 miles east of Ahmadnagar). But it was a barren military triumph without any political consequences. The 'brave captain', as Petro della Valle calls him, died on 14th May 1626 with his mission unfulfilled. Yet the deep impression he made upon his enemies is preserved for us in the *Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri*: "He kept down the turbulent spirits of the Deccan, and maintained his exalted position to the end of his life, and closed his career with honour. History records no other instance of an Abyssinian slave arriving at such eminence."

Shahji Bhonsle (father of Shivaji) had fought in the battle of Bhatvadi on the side of Malik Ambar. There were other Maratha *sardars*, too, ranged on opposite sides in that engagement. Among those that fought for the Mughals was Lukhji Jadhavrao, Shahji's father-in-law. On account of some quarrel he had with Malik Ambar after Bhatvadi, Shahji deserted to the camp of Ibrahim Adil Shah (Bijapur), but returned to the Nizamshahi (Ahmadnagar) when the great Abyssinian died (1626). Next year saw the death of Ibrahim Adil Shah on 12th September, and of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir soon after, 29th October 1627. The accession of Shah Jahan followed on 4th February 1628, after a short struggle for the throne. During this period conditions in the Deccan as well as the Mughal Empire were in such a state of flux and confusion that no one's loyalty could be counted upon. There were two parties within every State: one patriotic and the other pro-Mughal. There were, also, not a few individuals who were mere time-servers and careerists. We need not probe into all the details of this political welter. A few prominent examples should suffice for illustration.

Shahji's return to Ahmadnagar took place under peculiar circumstances. The new Emperor Shah Jahan decided upon a more vigorous policy in the Deccan than Jahangir had pursued. The conduct of Fath Khan, son of the redoubtable Malik Ambar, was an encouraging symptom; unlike his partriotic father, he was inclined more and more to favour the Mughals. Consequently, he was put in prison by his master, Murtaza Nizam Shah. On the other hand, Khan Jahan Lodi, the Imperial Governor of the Deccan, was in revolt against the Emperor, if only to cover his own failure in sustaining the Mughal interests in his charge. During the last days of Jahangir he had ceded back to the Nizam Shah an important portion of Berar (Balaghat) which Khurram (now Shah Jahan) had himself conquered. Shahji and Murtaza saw in this an opportunity to recover their lost position. Shah Jahan had dispatched Lukhji Jadhavrao

in order to rally the pro-Mughal elements within the Nizam's dominion. Murtaza, however, was provoked into a blunder by the unpatriotic activities of that traitor. Lakhji was invited to an interview in the fort of Daulatabad and treacherously murdered, along with his two sons and a grandson, on 25th July 1629. This foul deed drove Shahji Bhonsle for the time being into the Mughal camp. As a result of this, Fath Khan was released from prison and restored to power by the Nizam Shah in sheer desperation. But the remedy proved worse than the disease. Fath Khan imprisoned his master, then murdered him, and finally capitulated to the Mughal Emperor (who was in the Deccan since February 1630) in March 1631. On the 7th June following, Mumtaj Mahal, the favourite queen of Shah Jahan, died at Burhanpur in her fourteenth child-bed and the disconsolate husband left the Deccan for the nonce, reaching Agra in November 1632. A devastating famine was raging in the Deccan at that time, which also made it very difficult for the Emperor to maintain his vast and luxurious camp in the South.

Shahji found in this Imperial withdrawal his second opportunity for the recovery of the independence of Ahmadnagar. So he left the Mughal camp and once again entered the Nizamshahi territory in June 1632. He raised a puppet on the throne of the Nizam Shah at Pimgad, since Daulatabad and Ahmadnagar were in Mughal hands, and tried to win the co-operation of the Adil Shah. In this he got the support of Murar Jagdev, the powerful Hindu general of Bijapur. For a while, even the traitor Fath Khan was lured away from the Imperial side, and the mighty stronghold of Daulatabad appeared to have been recovered. But it slipped away as easily, as the Khan was outbribed as well as overpowered by the Mughal generals, Mahabat Khan and his son Khan Zaman (17th June 1633). Nonetheless, Shahji did not lose heart. He gathered around him a vast army and captured Poona, Chakan, Nasik, Junner, Sangamner and the environs of Ahmadnagar. Murar Jagdev held out at Parenda. The Khan-i-khanan Mahabat Khan found this combination so formidable that he died of a broken heart on 26th October 1634.

To meet this menace, Shah Jahan dispatched Khan Dauran as viceroy of the Deccan in January 1635, and finally found it necessary to follow in person. He arrived at Daulatabad on 21st February 1636. Bijapur was torn by internal factions, bribed with Mughal gold, and coerced by a devastating campaign. On 6th May 1636, Adil Shah signed a treaty with the Emperor by which he agreed to desert the cause of Shahji and to join in a campaign against

him. Golkonda, was similarly won over by Imperial diplomacy in June 1636. Thus betrayed on all sides and deserted by his erstwhile ally, Shahji was driven from fort to fort. He made a last desperate bid to hold out in the stronghold of Mahuli in the Konkan and sought the help of the Portuguese. It is interesting to note, in the records of these Europeans, the decision: "The Council unanimously agreed that concerning Shahji who was pursued by two such powerful enemies as the Mughals and Adil Shah, with whom we are at peace and on friendly terms, it is not convenient to favour and help openly nor give him shelter in the fortress of Chaul; but, in case he were to go to Danda (Rajapuri) or wherever he should think best, that way he could be helped with all precaution." No wonder Shahji was constrained to surrender. In November 1636, he agreed to enter the service of Bijapur. This constituted an important landmark in the progress of Mughal Imperialism in the Deccan on the one hand and the growth of the Maratha movement on the other.

7. A Southern Interlude

The career of Shahji from the moment he joined the Adilshahi service in 1636 to his death in 1664 provides us a convenient link between the age that was rapidly passing away and the age that was as swiftly dawning. Politically it witnessed the absorption of the shattered bits of the once great Vijayanagar Empire, in the first instance, by the southward expanding Sultanates of Golkonda and Bijapur. Frustrated in the North by the more powerful Imperialism of the Mughals, the Muslims of the Deccan found tempting quarries in the chaotic conditions produced by the break up of the Karnatak dominion (at Talikota) in 1565. Though the titular succession of the Vijayanagar rulers continued in the Aravidu family for over a century after the Talikota disaster, they no longer commanded the allegiance of their whilom servants—the Nayaks and Palaygars. Venkata-pati II (1635-42) and Sri Ranga Raya III (1642-73) were contemporaries of Shahji during the last phase of his career in the South as a general in the service of Bijapur. The Sultans under whom Shivaji's father served were Muhammad Adil Shah (1636-56) and Ali Adil Shah (1656-64). Against them were pitted the petty chieftains of Ikkeri, Mysore, Ginji, Tanjore, Madura, and so forth, who were friendly neither among themselves nor towards their nominal suzerain, the fugitive Raya of Vijayanagar. "The old kings of this country," wrote Antoine de Proenza, a Jesuit observer, in 1659, "appear by their jealousies and impru-

dent actions to invite the conquest of entire India by the Muslims."

We have stated before that the wars of the times were political rather than religious. They were carried on for the sake of territorial aggrandisement rather than for religious conversion.* If, in the course of warfare, temples became targets, it was more because they were storehouses of wealth than because they contained idols. Had it been otherwise, we cannot explain how Hindu generals like Shahji could serve at all in such a context. If occasionally the soldiery indulged in acts of fanaticism, it was more on account of their own undisciplined propensities than because of the policy of their masters. The chroniclers, too, who were very often orthodox men of religion, imparted to their records a flavour of bigotry in order to glorify the Faith in their own way. Thus the *Muhammad-nama* declared: "As the Karnatak and Malnad had not been conquered before by any Muslim king of the Deccan, Muhammad Adil Shah thought of bringing them under his sway, in order to strengthen and glorify the Islamic religion in the dominion of the Hindus." The *Basat-in-us-Salatin* added: "to win for himself the titles of *Mujahid* and *Ghazi*." In spite of these literary protestations of faith, we find that—as under the Mughal Emperors—a host of Hindu *sardars* served under the Sultans of the South as administrators and generals. With Shahji were his two sons Sambhaji and Ekoji (or Vyankoji) and numerous others named in the chronicles—the Mores and the Ghorpades, for example. In Golkonda were the famous brothers Akanna and Madanna who wielded dictatorial power.

To start with, Golkonda and Bijapur joined hands in the subjugation of the peninsula; but Bijapur at all stages was the senior partner. The forces of Golkonda were to proceed along the eastern coastal regions, while the Adilshahi armies marched through the heart of the country following a more westerly route. Nevertheless, a conflict between them at some stage was inevitable over the division of spoils, especially as there was on the Golkonda side an ambitious and capable general in the Persian merchant adventurer Mir Jumla. But we need not dwell on their parochial squabbles any more than on the military and other incidental details. The chief feature of the situation was that the Muslim conquerors were more united and

* These observations do not contradict the evidence cited earlier in the context of the foundation of Vijayanagar. The Turki conquerors from the North were fanatical. The Sultans of Golkonda and Bijapur, like the Mughal Emperors (with the exception of Aurangzeb), were more liberal.

better organised in their purpose of conquest than were the local chieftains who were called upon to defend their hearths and homes. Three expeditions were led into the Malnad area of Mysore by Randaula Khan and Shahji between 1637 and 1640. During the very first of them, Kenge Hanunla, the chief of Basavapattan, betrayed Virabhadra, the Raja of Ikkeri, on account of the personal quarrel he had with him. The result was that—*divide et impera*—both fell a prey to the conquerors in due course. Similarly the chief of Tadpatri, during the second Bijapur expedition, saved himself at the expense of Kempe Gauda of Bangalore. The unscrupulous Afzal Khan, like Murtaza Nizam Shah at Daulatabad, called the gullible Kasturi Ranga (chief of Sirā) to an interview and murdered him.

The contemporary English, Dutch and Jesuit records throw ample light upon the situation, from which it is difficult to resist quotation. "This country is at present full of wars and troubles," states an English factory record, "for the King (Sri Ranga Raya) and three of his Nagues (Nayaks) are at variance and the King of Vizapore's army is come into this country on the one side, and the King of Golkonda's on the other, both against this King (Sri Ranga)." "It appears certain," writes the Jesuit Proenza, "that, if the three Nayaks (of Madura, Tanjore and Ginji) had joined Sri Ranga, with all the troops they could gather, they would easily have succeeded in chasing the common enemy and depriving him of the advantage he had taken of their disunion and reciprocal betrayal. But Providence which wanted to punish them left them to this spirit of folly which precipitated the ruin of those princes and their dominions."

That all was not well on the side of the conquerors either, is indicated by the report of the English factors in September 1654: "The King of Golkonda, Abdulla Qutb Shah, had long been jealous of the power wielded by his servant Mir Jumla, and an open breach had now occurred between them. The latter was suspected of an intention of making himself an independent sovereign of the territory he had conquered in the Carnatic; but he was well aware of the difficulty of standing alone, and after making overtures to the King of Bijapur, he finally succumbed to the intrigues of Aurangzeb, who as Viceroy of the Deccan was eagerly watching for an opportunity to interfere... Towards the end of 1655, an act provoked by the haughty behaviour of his son precipitated the crisis, and drove Mir Jumla into the arms of Aurangzeb, with disastrous results to the Golkonda kingdom" (Foster). Aurangzeb was Viceroy of the Deccan for the second time from 1652 to 1657, and he

finally effected the annexation of Bijapur and Golkonda in 1686-87. Despite this impending calamity to themselves—of which the Sultans could not have been unaware, considering the known policy of the Mughals in the Deccan—they went on merrily with their sallies in the South, instead of consolidating their own position at home. That they were able to make headway at all into the peninsula was due more to the weakness of the Hindus than to the strength of the Muslims.

The loss of Vellore in April 1647 was a great blow to Sri Ranga Raya from which he could never recover. 5,800 of his troops were slaughtered in its defence and he had to submit paying an indemnity of 50 *lakhs* of *hons* and 150 elephants. Mustafa Khan, the victor of Vellore, was feted in Bijapur, a few months after which he started on his last campaign. Tirumala Nayak of Madura, having quarrelled with the Nayaks of Ginji and Tanjore, invited the Bijapur general to invest the stronghold of Ginji in which he himself also joined. But the siege was protracted by its heroic defence and a severe famine that was raging around. Mustafa died under the strain, but the fortress was captured by his successor Khan Muhammad on 28th December 1648. With this event we reach the climax in the fortunes of Bijapur. The anti-climax came within ten years.

Muhammad Adil Shah, after a prolonged illness, died on 4th November 1656. Ali Adil Shah (eighteen years old) succeeded, but without a clear title. Factions were rife within the capital as well as the kingdom. Aurangzeb, taking advantage of this situation, attacked Bidar which fell after gallant resistance in March 1657. Kalyani followed suit on 1st August the same year. The road to Bijapur lay open to the Imperial forces. But the Adilshahi was saved for the time being only because Shah Jahan suddenly called off the campaign. Then Aurangzeb was summoned to the North by the sudden illness of the Emperor and the ensuing struggle for the Mughal throne. Yet Adil Shah had to surrender Bidar, Kalyani and Parenda to the Imperialists and in addition agree to pay an indemnity of 1½ *crores* of rupees of which a third was immediately remitted to Shah Jahan. In the face of all these misfortunes, the nobles carried on their ignoble party strife within the State. This culminated in the murder of Khan Muhammad—captor of Ginji—on 11th November 1657. That crime was not less portentous of the fate of Bijapur than was the assassination of Mahmud Gawan in the case of the Bahmanis. The fall of Afzal Khan at Pratapgad at the hands of Shivaji in 1659, as we shall see a little later, was, as an Indian proverb has it, 'like an axe laid at the root of a falling tree'.

The last desperate efforts made by some of the Hindu leaders of the South during this period become quite intelligible in the light of the foregoing events. For instance, according to Fr. Proenza, "Muthu Virappa Nayak, Tirumala's successor, appeared to rectify the mistakes of his father and throw off the yoke of the Muhammadans. Resolved to refuse the annual tribute which they had imposed, he began to make preparations for a vigorous resistance, and furnished with soldiers and munitions the fortress of Trichinopoly which was the key to his dominions on the northern side". But the other Nayaks were still laggard and invited the Adilshahis instead of co-operating with Muthu Virappa in their common defence. The result was that the Bijapur troops under Shahji fell on Tanjore on 19th March 1659. That principality was finally conquered by Shahji's son Vyankoji in 1675. Meanwhile, further resistance was offered by Chokkanatha, son of Muthu Virappa. Despite the treachery of his rebellious general Linganna, he overawed all opposition and succeeded in bringing about a temporary coalition between the forces of Madura, Tanjore and Ginji in 1662. But this proved of no avail for long.

The role on Shahji during this difficult period was too intriguing for historians to unravel. He was apparently different from most of his prominent contemporaries, like his own father-in-law Lukhji Jadhavrao or his other kinsman Baji Ghorpade, who were opposed to him. He had several enemies even within the Adilshahi during his long period of loyal service to that State from 1636 to 1664. Mustafa Khan, the second Bijapur commander under whom Shahji served, suspected his loyalty and got him arrested during the siege of Ginji (25th July 1648). Baji Ghorpade, who belonged to a collateral branch of the Bhonsle family, was among those sent to effect the arrest. He was taken to Bijapur in the custody of Afzal Khan, but acquitted and honourably released ten months later (16th May 1649). This only vindicated the confidence that the Adil Shah had placed in him, as revealed by a *firman* dated 11th January 1648, in which one Yashvantrao Wadve was asked to act under the orders of "Maharaj Farzand (son) Shahji Bhonsle", though earlier (1st August 1644) he had been described as a "reprobate" because of alleged complicity in the disloyal activities of Dadaji Kond-dev and other coadjutors of Shivaji.* In fact, among those also arrested

* Another important letter dated 26th May, 1658, from Ali Adil Shah to Shahji, exonerates Shahji in very explicit terms from all complicity in the activities of Shivaji. "The faults of Shivaji will not be laid upon you," it states, "but his offences

and released along with Shahji were Kanhoji Jedhe and Dadaji Krishna Lohkare who were close associates of Shivaji and Dadaji Kond-dev in the movement whose development we shall trace in the next chapter. In the contemporary family records of the Jedhes there is an entry according to which—at the moment of their release from the Bijapur prison—Shahji exhorted Kanhoji Jedhe and Dadaji Lohkare saying: “Your *watan* is in the *Maual*, and my son Shivba (Shivaji) is in Khedebare and Poona. You should help him with your troops; and, since you are influential in those parts, you should also see to it that all the Deshmukhs submit to Shivba and obey him. You should all assert your strength, and fight in all faithfulness to Shivba, should any Mughal or Adilshahi armies march against you”.

Shahji had started his career as a minor captain in the Nizamshahi of Ahmadnagar. He had risen to be King-Maker by 1636, when he was driven to accept service at Bijapur as the result of a military defeat. Then he served successively under the command of three capable Muslim commanders, Randaula Khan, Mustafa and Khan Muhammad. After his release in 1649, he was given full charge of the province of Bangalore with an income of 5 *lakhs* of *hons*. The districts of Poona and Supa were already his, being the rump of the estates owned by him since his rise to power in the Nizamshahi. Besides these, his conquests included Kanakgiri, Kolar, Arni, Ginji, Teganapatam (Cuddalore), Porto Novo and Basavapattan—in the last of which he died as the result of an accident on 23rd January 1664.

NOTE: GEOGRAPHY OF MAHARASHTRA

Maharashtra denotes the country inhabited by the Marathas. Its extent may be roughly indicated by a line drawn from Daman (South of Surat) in the West to the Wainganga (East of Nagpur) down along a zigzag frontier passing through Bidar and Bijapur and terminating in Goa. This region, about 500 miles in length, is naturally divided vertically into three sections: (i) the coastal strip known as the Konkan, (ii) the ghat section covered by the Sahyadri or Western Ghats, and (iii) the plateau above the ghats, on the eastern side, called *Desh*. The coast and the western side of the ghats are exposed to the monsoon, though the

are being imputed to him only. Hence, . . . the grace and favours which you had enjoyed from His late Majesty (Md. Adil Shah), in the same measure—nay more than that—are confirmed to you. There will be no change or deprivation in your rank and fiefs. . . Should any one allege anything against you, I shall consider it utter falsehood and give it no place in my mind”.

rainfall becomes less and less as one moves North. On the eastern side of the ghats and above, in the *Desh*, the rainfall is scanty, but the black soil is fertile. While the coastal region is moist, above the ghats it is always dry. Except in the Konkan the people have to work very hard for their subsistence on account of the geographical conditions. This has made them hardy, self-reliant and brave. Those especially who lived among the ghats acquired a reputation for sturdy and warlike character. The northern portion of this central backbone of Maharashtra was known as *Dang*, the middle one *Mawal*, and the southern *Malnad*. Among the inhabitants of these lands, the Kolis or fishermen of the coast, the Mawale or peasants of the valleys among the ghats, and the Berads and other forest tribes provided the best fighting material. They made a mark in history by their toughness and powers of endurance. The country is noted for its numerous fortresses, called *Durg* on the coast (Sindhudurg, Vijayadurg, etc.), *Gad* on the hilltops (Raigad, Simhagad, Pratapgad, etc.), and *Kot* on the level plains. These afforded fighting strength as well as protection to the people in times of danger. Shivaji, in a letter addressed to the Mughal officers, declared: "For the last three years you have been under orders from Aurangzeb to seize my country and forts; but even the steed of unimaginable exertion is too weak to gallop over this hard country, and its conquest is impossible. My home is unlike the forts of Kalyani and Bidar, and is not situated on a plain. It has lofty mountain ranges, 200 leagues in length and 40 leagues in depth. Everywhere there are *nullas* difficult to ford... Shayista Khan was sent against these sky-kissing mountains and abysmal valleys. He laboured hard for three long years, ... but at last he too encountered a terrible disaster and went away in disgrace." Indeed, geography made as important a contribution to building up the Maratha nation as the character of the people which was itself a product of the soil.

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THE RISE of the Maratha power is one of the most interesting as well as instructive themes of Indian history. The transformation of the peaceful peasantry of Maharashtra into a powerful political force which came very near to founding an all-India Maratha dominion in the course of a little over a century, is a phenomenon of great importance and interest to the student of modern India. Few other sections of the people of India have provided a parallel to the achievements of the Marathas from the political and cultural points of view. The social and religious aspects of the Maratha movement have been described in the preceding chapter. The Democracy of Devotion was asked by the Islamic challenge to Hindu civilisation during a social revolution that paved the way for the foundation of a religion which tended to grow into a movement. The new and cultural results are assessed in a later chapter. — were the products of a political upheaval whose rise and development will engage our attention here.

Chronologically, the work of building up the political movement may be said to have commenced from the capture of the fort of Toranapur near Poona by Shivaji in 1673. That may have appeared at the moment a mere boyish escapade of no consequence—for Shivaji was just sixteen years of age then—but it was really the beginning of a revolution. (When the Bastille fell in 1789, Louis XVI is reported to have pronounced it a mere revolt, but his wise minister with a deeper insight declared: "No, Sir, it is a Revolution.") Toranapur soon developed into a fortress which threatened to tear up the very foundations of the Sultanate of the Deccan as well as the Empire of the Mughals. In 1674 this rebellious son of a British officer proclaimed to the world the formal establishment of Maratha rule. Within half a century of this great event, Maratha troops were seen within the gates of the Imperial capital wherein they were destined to play a fatal role. The eighteenth century was witness to happenings not less momentous in India than in the rest of the world. The Mughal Empire fell and in its place appeared to arise a

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SVARAJYA

1. Introduction.
2. The Rise of Shivaji.
3. Shivaji and the Mughals.
4. The Foundation of Svarajya.
5. Shivaji and the Sultans.
6. The Struggle for Survival.

1. Introduction

THE RISE of the Maratha power is one of the most fascinating as well as instructive themes of Indian history. The transformation of the peaceful peasantry of Maharashtra into a powerful political force which came very near to founding an all-India Maratha dominion, in the course of a little over a century, is a phenomenon of great importance and interest to the student of modern India. Few other sections of the people of India have provided a parallel to the achievements of the Marathas from the political and cultural points of view. The social and religious aspects of the Maratha movement have been described in the preceding chapter. The Democracy of Devotion provoked by the Islamic challenge to Hindu civilisation caused a social revolution that paved the way for the foundation of *Svarajya* which tended to grow into *Samrajya*. Its literary and cultural results are assessed in a later chapter. They were the products of a political upheaval whose rise and development will engage our attention here.

Chronologically, the work of building up the political movement may be said to have commenced from the capture of the little fortress of Torna, near Poona, by Shivaji in 1646. That may have appeared at the moment a mere boyish escapade of no consequence—for Shivaji was just sixteen years of age then—but it was really the beginning of a revolution. (When the Bastille fell in 1789, Louis XVI is reported to have pronounced it a mere *revolt*; but his wise minister with a deeper insight declared: "Nay, Sire, it is a *Revolution!*") Torna soon developed into a tornado which threatened to tear up the very foundations of the Sultanates of the Deccan as well as the Empire of the Mughals. In 1674 this rebellious son a Bijapur officer proclaimed to the world the formal establishment of *Maratha Svarajya*. Within half a century of this great event, Maratha troops were seen within the gates of the Imperial capital wherein they were destined to play a fateful role. The eighteenth century was witness to happenings not less momentous in India than in the rest of the world. The Mughal Empire fell, and in its place appeared to arise an

Empire of the Marathas, despite the great disaster of Panipat in 1761. But in 1818, Bajirao II, the last of the effective successors of Shivaji, became a pensioner of the English East India Company. This ultimate result may illustrate what H. A. L. Fisher has described as the "play of the contingent and the unforeseen" in history. It was due to the miscarriage of the promise of the epoch of Shivaji, in the time of the Peshvas. How this happened can be understood only by a close and comparative study of Shivaji and his successors.

Such a study, however, is fraught with controversies all of which cannot be fully dealt with here. Who were the Bhonsles? Were they Kshatriyas, and from Rajputana? When was Shivaji born, on 10th April 1627 or 19th February 1630? Who acted treacherously in the encounter with the Bijapur general at Pratapgad in 1659, Shivaji or Afzal Khan? When did Shivaji return from Agra and by what route? What was Shivaji's motive in his Karnatak expedition, political or economic? Was Shahji (Shivaji's father) involved in his son's activities, and to what extent? Was Shivaji's objective merely the liberation of the Marathas from subjection to the Muslims, or did he aim at the establishment of a Hindu Empire all over India? These and several other questions involving the closest scrutiny of contemporary records have agitated research scholars in Maratha history for a very long time. Answers to some of them cannot be given to the final satisfaction or all. In a general survey, such as ours we shall be content with only noting them and the weight of authoritative opinions without ourselves examining all the evidence here.

Again, Maratha history is so replete with thrilling episodes that few writers can resist the temptation to dwell on their romantic details with enthusiasm. To mention only the most familiar among them: the capture of Javli, the encounter with Afzal Khan, the rout of Shayista Khan, the escape from Agra, the raids on Surat, the retaking of Simhagad, and the occupation of the islands of Khanderi and Underi (near Bombay), might each provide vivid stuff for the modern screen. The coronation of Shivaji at Raigad in 1674, attracted and dazzled even foreigners. Marathi poets, dramatists and novelists have freely drawn upon all these themes with gusto. An English Factory record, dated 16th June 1664, noted: "Report hath made him (Shivaji) an airy body and adds wings, or else it were impossible hee could bee at soe many places as hee is said to be at all at one time." No wonder that among his own countrymen popular faith and imagination endowed Shivaji with the divine character of an *avatar* or incarnation of God! But

we must brush aside all this and assess the work of that great nation-builder by the norms of sober, if more prosaic, historians.

2. The Rise of Shivaji

The political biography of Shivaji is best studied in three clear divisions: (i) Shivaji's early career up to the overthrow of Afzal Khan (1630-59); (ii) his struggle with the forces of the Mughal Empire (1659-74); and (iii) from his coronation to his death (1674-80). The two established powers against whom Shivaji had to contend were the Sultans of the Deccan (particularly Bijapur) and the Mughal Emperors (Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb). Golkonda and Janjira were mere auxiliaries. Though all his enemies survived him, before his death Shivaji had made of the Marathas a formidable new power in Indian politics. During the first of the three stages indicated above, he got the better of his immediate rival Bijapur; during the second, he came out unscathed enough to proclaim his sovereign independence; and during the last phase of his life, he consolidated his gains, augmented his possessions, and imparted to his kingdom a dynamism which gave it a very dominant position in the course of the next century. We shall follow these stages one by one.

Shivaji was born at Shivneri on Friday, 19th February, 1630, according to the best contemporary evidence available.* His father Shahji Bhonsle was then passing through a very critical period of his life. In 1629 Lakhji Jadhavrao (Shivaji's maternal grandfather) had been brutally murdered along with his sons and a grandson in the fort of Daulatabad. In the course of the next six years (1630-36) the Nizamshahi (of Ahmadnagar) was wiped out, and Shahji was forced to enter the service of Bijapur, by the combined action of the Imperial and Adilshahi forces. Shivaji's father was thereafter continually campaigning in the South on behalf of his new masters, until his death in 1664. In the course of this long period of service (1636-64) Shahji attained to a position of considerable importance, power and prestige. With his headquarters at Bangalore, most of the time, he acquired for himself vast estates in the South with important consequences to Maratha history, as we shall notice later. He entrusted the management of his northern *jagir* of Poona and Supa to his trusted steward Dadaji Kond-dev, leaving the young Shivaji and his mother Jijabai also to his care. He had taken to himself another

* *Jedhe Sakavali and Shiva Bharat.*

wife by whom he had a son named Vyarkoji (or Ekoji) who inherited his father's southern estates at his death.

Though ostensibly neglected by Shahji, Shivaji grew up to manhood under the wise and capable Dadaji's attention and guidance. His mother, too, exercised on him an influence which inspired him with noble and patriotic ideals. The estate on which he lived, being lately acquired from the Nizamshahi, was not yet well settled under its Adilshahi masters. Besides, it constituted a sort of no-man's-land between the dominions of Bijapur and the Mughal Empire. Its hills and valleys already studded with forts which often changed masters, owing to the unsettled conditions, filled the fiery young boy with the spirit of adventure which soon developed into patriotic fervour. He gathered round him a following of other mettlesome youths like himself and started on a career of capturing fort after fort, like Torna, Simhagad, Purandar, etc. Not content with these, he constructed new ones of his own like Rajgad, Pratapgad and Raigad. Rajgad was his residence for twenty years after the death of his tutor Dadaji Kond-dev in 1647; thereafter he lived at Raigad (1647-80) where he celebrated his coronation in 1674, and died in 1680. Pratapgad (in the vicinity of Mahabaleshvar) was the scene of his exploit against Afzal Khan in 1659. Therein he installed an image of his favourite goddess Bhavani after whom he named his magic sword which always brought him victory. Before he was out of his 'teens, Shivaji had assumed the title of "*Chhatrapati*" by which he always came to be known thereafter. His royal seal cast in these early years bore the significant inscription:

This seal of Shiva, son of Shah(ji), respected by the world, shines increasingly like the growing moon, for security and prosperity!

Documents of those days indicate that the blueprint of the *Svarajya* that he was engaged in establishing was ready in all its essential features by 1653. He signalled this formative phase by the erection of the stronghold of Vijaya-durg in the Konkan (western seaboard).

While these activities brought him fame and self-confidence, they also brought him trouble. The Bijapur authorities, alarmed by his growing power, implicated his father and imprisoned him for a time (1648-49). Shivaji invoked Mughal intervention, friends at the Bijapur court interceded, and Shahji was released—not only because nothing was proved against him but also because he was too important and indispensable. Emboldened by this, Shivaji became more aggressive in his attacks. The capture of Javli in January 1656 bore evidence of this. Its controver-

sial details apart, we may note that it brought to Shivaji considerable accession of strength. The Mores who were masters of Javli were hereditary vassals of the Adilshahs. They had accumulated vast treasures in the course of generations, and their territories provided recruits for the Bijapur armies. Besides, Javli was of great strategic importance for the growth of Shivaji's nascent kingdom. He followed up this success against the Mores by the subjugation of other Maratha vassals of Bijapur like the Shirkes and Surves. These triumphs were crowned or consolidated by the building of the historic stronghold of Pratapgad. Perched on a point 4,000 feet high on the Sahyadri, it guarded no fewer than eight important passes into the Konkan.

Bijapur could no longer look on with indifference while Shivaji attained such menacing power. He was making rapid headway into the Konkan. He occupied or raided a number of places in the Thana and Kolaba districts. Kalyan, Bhiwandi etc., were turned by him into dockyards and naval bases to overawe the Portuguese and the Siddis (of Janjira). Yet Bijapur had not been able to pay sufficient attention to Shivaji because of other troubles. Muhammad Adil Shah was long dying from a protracted illness (1646-56). Aurangzeb was utilising his second viceroyalty of the Deccan (1652-57) to encroach upon the Adilshahi territories. Bijapur only escaped, for the time being, from falling into his hands, because of Aurangzeb's sudden withdrawal to participate in the war of succession in the North. The murder of Khan-i-khanan Muhammad Khan, on 11th November 1657, revealed how Bijapur was torn by suicidal factions within. Nevertheless, Khawas Khan the new minister, and the Queen Mother of Ali Adil Shah—Bari Sahiba—tried to retrieve the desperate situation. They entrusted the task of dealing with Shivaji to a nobleman and general of rank, Afzal Khan.

It is well to recount the antecedents of this Adilshahi officer. He was employed, like Shahji, in the southern campaigns. When the latter was arrested at Ginji, in 1648, it was Afzal Khan who escorted the prisoner to Bijapur. Ten years earlier, he had treacherously murdered Kasturi Ranga, the chief of Sira (in Mysore), at an interview. Likewise it was suspected that the death of Shivaji's elder brother, Sambhaji, at Kanakgiri (c. 1655) was due to Afzal Khan with whom he was serving. Now he was ordered to bring Shivaji "alive or dead", and he promised he would take him alive "without alighting from my horse even once!" Initially he was equipped with a large force of 10,000 horse and he tried to mobilise local troops as he

marched on his mission. In this he enjoyed the advantage of having been (1649-54) the *Subahdar* of Wai, presently to be the scene of his last adventure. In order to strike terror into the hearts of his enemies and to immobilise them, he devastated the lands on his way, and particularly ravaged the sacred shrines of Pandharpur and Tuljapur.

In spite of his rhodomontade, however, Afzal Khan had been advised by the Bari Sahiba to take no risks. A contemporary English record (dated 10th December 1659) noted that he was "counselled to pretend friendship with his enemy, *which he did*". According to Sabhasad, another contemporary of Shivaji's, Afzal Khan's design was to lure Shivaji into a trap and then seize or kill him. The family records of the Jedhes, who were loyal to Shivaji in his patriotic endeavours, vividly describe what happened in detail. The Marathas were duly warned of the dangerous situation. "The Khan is treacherous," they state; "when his object is accomplished, he will ruin us all. This Maratha kingdom is our own; we should stand by Shivaji and protect it with our contingents and courage". Instead of a straight fight, Afzal Khan had recourse to a stratagem. He called Shivaji to an interview. While both parties were fully prepared for any contingency, the two met ostensibly for a peaceful parley at Pratapgad on 10th November 1659. The upshot of the affair was that the Khan was presently disembowelled by Shivaji.* The Maratha and Adilshahi forces were soon locked in a deadly combat on the banks of the Koyna. The stream was dyed red with the blood of the slaughtered. The Bijapur army was routed. Flushed with this triumph, the Marathas poured into the Adilshahi districts of South Konkan, defeated another Bijapuri army, and captured Panhala (Dec. 1659—Feb., 1660). These events proclaimed to the world that the future of the Deccan lay in the hands of Shivaji rather than with the Adil Shah.

3. Shivaji and the Mughals

It has been noted above that the dual task of Shivaji was to contend against the two established powers: the Adilshahi and the Mughal Empire. So long as he had to fight Bijapur on his flanks, Shivaji could not afford to quarrel with the Mughal Emperor. While Aurangzeb was viceroy of the Deccan (1652-57) he concentrated on the subjugation

* The weight of recorded evidence, as well as the probabilities of the case, supports the view that Afzal Khan struck the first blow and that Shivaji only committed what Burke calls, a 'preventive murder'. —Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, (4th ed 1948) p.73.

of Golkonda and Bijapur as he considered them to be more important enemies than Shivaji. The Maratha was after all the rebellious son of a Bijapuri officer who might peradventure be made use of in his designs against the Adilshahi. Even as late as 25th January 1658 Aurangzeb appeared to be in a conciliatory mood. In a letter of that date he promised Shivaji, in return for military assistance, to reward him with the grant of "all the villages belonging to your home, together with the forts and territory of Konkan, after the Imperialists seized the old Nizamshahi territory now in the hands of the Adil Shah." But when Aurangzeb was firmly seated on the Imperial *gadi*, and particularly after Shivaji's *coup* against Afzal Khan, he realised how dangerous the Maratha adventurer was.

In July 1659 the viceroyalty of the Deccan had been conferred upon Shayista Khan, uncle of the Emperor. He occupied Poona early in 1660 while Shivaji was besieged in Panhala (Kolhapur) by the Bijapuris. In July 1660 Shivaji effected his escape from Panhala when the heroic Baji Prabhu earned immortality for himself and his gallant followers by enacting in Pavankhind the Thermopylae of Maharashtra. For the next three years he was engaged in the conquest of southern Konkan (Ratnagiri district) while the defence of northern Konkan (Kolaba) was entrusted by him to his trusted lieutenants Netaji and Tanaji. Occasionally he made surprise attacks on the enemy, as he did on Kar Talab Khan (the Mughal general) at Bhore Ghat, on 3rd February 1661. The Khan was obliged to purchase safety by paying a heavy ransom. Finally, on the night of 5th April 1663, Shivaji pounced upon the camp of Shayista Khan himself at Poona and dealt such a lightning blow at the Imperial viceroy and his entourage, that it thrilled the whole country and made the Empire shudder. Reporting this to Surat from Rajapur, on 12th April 1663, Gyffard wrote: "Yesterday arrived a letter from the Rajah written himself to Ravji (Pandit), giving him an account how that he himself . . . wounded Shaista Khan with his own hand . . . Shivaji tells his men his Permisera (Parameshvara) bid him do it." In bitter humiliation Aurangzeb transferred his uncle (Shayista Khan) to a remote corner of his Empire—the penal province of Bengal which he himself described as "hell well stocked with bread". The Khan was relieved of his charge in the Deccan by Prince Muazzam about the middle of January 1664.

Shivaji allowed no respite either to himself or his enemies. Before Aurangzeb had time to recover from the shock of the Poona episode, another awaited him at Surat. In May following, Shivaji was reported at Vengurla on the

west coast. The Dutch Dagb Register noted: "Tidings came to Golkonda that our lodgings at Vingurla had been partially destroyed by Siwasi and that the inhabitants have fled". By next January he was at Surat 'to singe the beard of the Imperial lion in his own den'. It was the most important emporium of the Mughal Empire: from there Muslim pilgrims left for Mecca; and foreign merchants like the English, the French, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the Turks and Arabs had their settlements there. An English contemporary record from Surat states: "Sevajee told (them) that he was not come to doe any personal hurte to the English or other merchants, but only to revenge him selfe of Oram Zeb (Aurangzeb), because he had invaded his country". Nevertheless Abbe Carre noted that Shivaji left Surat as easily as he had entered it "having found in one single city all the wealth of the East and securing such war funds as would not fail for a long time". "Delighted," adds Valentyn, "to have plucked such a fine feather from Aurangzeb's tail!"

Aurangzeb was provoked beyond measure by these daring attacks of Shivaji. He now determined on taking severe action against him. Two of the most experienced among his generals were dispatched to the Deccan in order to put Shivaji out of commission. They were supplied with the best equipment that the Imperialists could command. Raja Jai Singh and Dilir Khan drew up an elaborate plan of action to make sure that nothing was left to chance. The Imperial army numbered 4,00,000 cavalry, besides a vast array of elephants and camels, etc. The support of the Adil Shah, the Siddis, and the Europeans was also canvassed. "Even Sevagy", writes Cosme da Guarda, "could not help being frightened". He at first tried to win over Jai Singh by an appeal to his Hindu sentiments, but he found that the Raja was a hard-boiled Mughal Imperialist. When resistance became inevitable, the Marathas put up a gallant fight. Their country was devastated, and eventually Purandar became the centre of decisive action. Murar Baji was the soul of this heroic struggle. At last, like Baji Prabhu, he fell fighting with his valiant band of Marathas. On 20th May 1665, Shivaji was compelled to seek conciliation. Jai Singh accepted his dignified surrender on 11th June 1665. Khafi Khan has described their historic meeting in graphic terms: "It was finally settled that out of the 35 forts which Shivaji possessed, the keys of 23 should be given up with their revenues amounting to 10 lakhs of *hons* or 40 lakhs of rupees. 12 small forts with moderate revenues were to remain in the possession of Shivaji's people. Sambha, his son, a boy of eight years, in whose name a *mansab* of 5,000

was granted, was to proceed to the Court with the Raja (Jai Singh) attended by a suitable retinue." Shivaji further agreed to serve the Emperor, if he was summoned, and to pay 40 lakhs of *hons* in thirteen annual instalments, if lands in the Painghat (Konkan) and Balaghat (Bijapuri uplands) were granted to him "after the expected conquest of Bijapur".

Though Jai Singh waxed eloquent on the obvious gains to the Empire from this arrangement, he was equally happy in having got off with such an easy triumph. Dilir Khan had confessed to him: "This campaign will end by ruining both you and me." So Jai Singh wrote to Aurangzeb: "Now that Adil Shah and Qutb Shah have united in mischief, it is necessary to win Shiva's heart by all means and send him to North India to have audience with your Majesty". By 'a thousand devcies' he prevailed upon Shivaji to visit the Imperial Court, which he did on 11th May 1666.

The sequel is one of the best known episodes in Shivaji's romantic career. Aurangzeb found in him a very hard nut to crack and was much exercised over his most advantageous disposal. Finally he thought of sending him to the North-West Frontier where he might be got rid of by some plausible 'accident'. Shivaji was too clever and nimble for such an easy solution. On the night of 17th August 1666 he effected his dramatic escape. On the 18th morning he was found to have fled from Agra. Until recently, it was generally held that Shivaji returned to Rajgad on 20th November 1666. This is the date recorded in the local *Jedhe Shakavali*. Sir Jadunath Sarkar has now discovered evidence in the Jaipur archives to suggest an earlier return home on 12th September. But, in spite of his weighty opinion, a letter from Jai Singh dated 15th November 1666—cited by Sarkar himself—would still pin us down to the later date (20th November) as the more plausible one. "My days are passing in distraction and anxiety", he writes to Aurangzeb on 15th November, "I have sent trusty spies to get news of Shiva". If Shivaji were already at Rajgad since 12th September the "trusty spies" of Jai Singh might have saved the redoubtable Raja from his "distraction and anxiety".

After this 'slap in the face' to Aurangzeb, troubles on the North-West frontier kept the Emperor busy suppressing the Yusufzai and other Pathan tribes. This work even necessitated the diversion to that frontier, of some of the best generals from other parts of the Empire. Consequently Dilir Khan was replaced in the Deccan by Jaswant Singh (who had been suspected of complicity with Shivaji in the Shayista Khan incident). Jai Singh too was recalled, but

he died on the way, not without the suspicion of having been mysteriously poisoned by order of the Emperor; it may be because of the suspected connivance of the Kachwahas in the escape of Shivaji from Agra. Jai Singh's son Ram Singh, who was looking after Shivaji in Agra, was transferred to the penal eastern province where he died of malaria. Meanwhile the bigoted religious policy of Aurangzeb against the Hindus was bearing bitter fruit. The *Maasir-i Alamgiri* states:

On 17th Zi-l Kadda 1079 H. (18 April 1669) it reached the ear of His Majesty, the Protector of the Faith, that in the provinces of Thatta, Multan and Benares, but especially in the latter, foolish Brahmans were in the habit of expounding frivolous books in their schools and that students and learners, Mussalmans as well as Hindus, went there even from long distances, led by a desire to become acquainted with the wicked sciences they taught. The Director of the Faith, consequently, issued orders to all the Governors of provinces to destroy with a willing hand the schools and temples of the infidels; and they were strictly enjoined to put an entire stop to the teaching and practising of idolatrous forms of worshipping.

Needless to add, these orders were meticulously carried out. The unexpected result was that the hands of Shivaji were strengthened by this reactionary policy. The *jiziya* and pilgrim taxes were reimposed on the Hindus. They had also to pay the customs duties at double the rate paid by the Muslims. Consequently, in the North, the Jats, Satnamis, Sikhs and Rajputs revolted against this tyranny. Shivaji addressed a letter of appeal to Aurangzeb pointing out the impolicy of religious intolerance. "To show bigotry for any man's creed and customs," he pleaded, "is tantamount to altering the words of the Holy Book: to draw new lines on a picture is to find fault with the artist". But argument had little to do with blind fanaticism. An English observer noted: "The arch rebel Sevagee is again engaged in armes against Orangshah who out of blind zeale for reformation hath demolished many of the Gentiles temples and forceth many to turn Musslemins".

Sarkar has rightly remarked that the historian "cannot help feeling that Shivaji's visit to Aurangzeb produced as its ultimate consequence a revolution in the destiny of the Maratha people. This event marks a decisive turning-point in the history of India as a whole". It opened the eyes of Shivaji to the true nature of the situation. For a while after his return, he bided his time and consolidated his position by internal re-organisation. He even agreed to help the Emperor in his campaign against Bijapur; and

Aurangzeb recognised his title of *Raja*. But there could be no real peace between the two for long. The religious offensive of Aurangzeb provoked a military offensive on the part of the Marathas.

On 4th January 1670 Simhagad (near Poona) was retaken from its Imperial keeper by the heroic dash of Tanaji Malusare. The brave captain laid down his life, like Wolfe at Quebec, in the hour of triumph; and to this day Maratha minstrels have continued to sing:

“And ye Marathas brave! give ear,

Tanaji's exploits crowd to hear.”

Purandar was recovered by Nilopant Mujumdar on 8th March of the same year. Shivaji followed this up in August by laying siege to Junnar in the Imperial territory. Finally he swooped down on Surat for the second time on 4th October. On this occasion he carried away with him loot worth about 132 *lakhs*, and Surat lived in continuous dread of Shivaji thereafter. “The trade of this the richest port of India was practically destroyed... Business was effectively scared away from Surat, and inland producers hesitated to send their goods to this the greatest emporium of India”. (Sarkar). While returning from Surat, on 17th October 1670, Shivaji encountered the Imperial General Daud Khan at Vani Dindori (15 miles East of Nasik). In that severe action, as Sabhasad calls it, the Marathas won a resounding victory, killing 3000 of the enemy and capturing two of their officers, besides 4000 horses and other material. Then Shivaji made a grand sweep into Baglana, Khandesh and Berar. On 5th January 1671 he captured Salher. When the Imperialists made a desperate attempt to retake it a year later, they were beaten off with heavy losses as at Dindori. The Persian records are silent on this victory, but the English confirm it.

We may not go into the history of all the desultory warfare of this period. In October 1772 Shivaji appeared before Surat for the third time and justified his raids by declaring: “As your Emperor has forced me to keep an army for the defence of my people and country; that army must be paid by his subjects”. The Governor of Surat made this a pretext for collecting taxes from the Hindu residents and pocketed the whole amount! The rot that had entered the enemies of Shivaji is well reflected in the following remarks of Gerald Aungier, dated 16th September 1673:—

Sevagee bears himself up manfully against all his enemies... and though it is probable that the Mogulls army may fall into his country this yeare, and Ballol Chaune (Bahlol Khan) on the other side, yet neither of them can stay long for provisions, and his flying army

will constantly keep them in allarme; nor is it either their design to destroy Sevagee totally, for the *Umaras* maintain a politic war to their own profit at the King's charge and never intend to prosecute violently so as to end it.

Shivaji, therefore, wisely made hay while the sun shone. Bahlol Khan in the above reference was the Bijapuri general. We shall describe Shivaji's relations with the Sultans of the Deccan after giving a brief account of his coronation at Raigad, which he celebrated on Friday, 5th June 1674, to crown all his triumphs.

4. The Foundation of Svarajya

Starting his adventurous career as the rebellious son of an Adilshahi *jagirdar*, Shivaji had, in the course of three decades (1645-74), made himself master of North and South Konkan extending from Ramnagar and Baglana in the north to Ratnagiri and Kolhapur in the south. Since his triumph over Afzal Khan in 1659 he had gained in power as well as prestige in the Deccan over the decadent state of Bijapur. As the result of his blows at the Mughal Empire, as illustrated by the Shayista Khan incident in Poona, his escape from Agra, the repeated raids on Surat, and recent military victories over the Imperial Generals (Bahadur Khan and Dilir Khan), Aurangzeb was much worried. Sabhasad relates: 'The Badshah at Delhi felt much distressed at the bad news. For three days he did not come out in the Hall of Public Audience. So sad was he that he said: "It seems God has taken away the Badshahi from the Mussalmans and conferred it on Shivaji."' This *de facto* position needed to be regularised; hence the coronation. Without his formal proclamation as sovereign, his grants, assignments and orders would lack legal validity, and his rivals would consider him no more than an upstart usurper. Besides, Shivaji's ambition was not confined to military conquests and the loot that they brought him. It was not even the mere negative liberation of the Marathas from the yoke of the Muslim rulers of Bijapur and Delhi. It was the positive and constructive ideal of *Svarajya* that inspired him. With this end in view he had, already, worked at the administrative organisation of his territories during intervals of his military expeditions. The *Rajyabhisheka* (coronation) was intended to lay the coping stone on these endeavours, and to proclaim to the world that the new Maratha State was on a par, in political and legal status, with the Adilshahi of Bijapur, the Qutbshahi of Golkonda and the Mughal Empire. He would, if possible, drive his enemies from the field altogether and establish a single

sovereign *Hindavi Svarajya* wherever his arms could reach. If he did not live long enough to realise that dream in its territorial expansion, he certainly succeeded in inspiring his successors with that ideal and laid the foundations of that *Svarajya* on very sound lines. We will assess the character of the Maratha Polity as a whole in a later chapter.

Poona was the cradle and nursery in which Shivaji commenced his political career. Rajgad was his tentative capital during the formative years of his nascent kingdom. Now he pitched upon Rajgad as the permanent capital of sovereign Maharashtra. It was centrally situated in the heart of his territories. Nearly equidistant from Poona, Bombay and Satara, it had a political and military, no less than commercial, value all its own. Detached from the Sahyadri but elevated above the Konkan, Rajgad is removed from yet served by the sea, on account of its nearness to Mahad which had considerable trade importance in those days. Strategically it was protected from direct attacks by Bijapur as well as the Mughals; from its position in the Maval country, and nearness to the sea, Shivaji could ideally direct his military and maritime operations. From a religious point of view, the place was twice blessed by the shrine of Parashuram at Chiplun and that of Bhavani at Pratapgad!*

The ceremonial was a gorgeous one befitting the ideas of the time. Among the foreigners who attended it were Henry Oxenden who represented the English, and the Dutch merchant Abraham Le Faber. The Raja assured them that "he would after the coronation act more like a prince by taking care of his subjects and endeavouring the advancements of commerce and trade in his Dominions which he could not attend before, being in perpetuall warrs with the King of Vizapore and the Great Mogull". (English Records). Sabhasad observes: "In this age of Mlenchha Badshah's rule all over the world, only this Maratha Badshah became *Chhatrapati*."

Chhatrapati literally means "master of the umbrella." It symbolised the function of the monarch as Protector. Shivaji did not circumscribe his duty to protect, narrowly, to the Hindus. In contrast to Aurangzeb's policy of religious intolerance, the Maratha ruler allowed no one to suffer on account of his Faith. In spite of the fact that he was constantly at war with the Muslim powers, he had no objection to the employment of Muslims in his service. In his navy were two Muslim admirals, Daulat Khan and

* S. R. Sharma, *Maratha History Re-examined*, p.176.



SHIVAJI
The Creator of Maratha Svarajya.

Siddi Misri. His *Munshi* (secretary) was another Muslim, Mulla Haidar. He endowed Muslim religious establishments in his kingdom, like Bawa Yakut's at Kelshi. Even Khafi Khan, the Mughal historian of Aurangzeb, has recorded that Shivaji respected the holy *Quran* and Muslim women.

He made it a rule that wherever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of any one. Whenever a copy of the *Quran* came into his hands, he treated it with respect and gave it to some of his Mussalman followers. When the women of any Hindu or Mussalman were taken prisoner by his men, and they had no friend to protect them, he watched over them until the relations came with suitable ransom to buy their liberty.

At the coronation ceremony were gathered Muslims and Europeans no less than Hindus and Brahmans. Though the vast majority of them were strict vegetarians, as Fryer reported, special arrangements were made for supplying meat to the Moors and Europeans. "Though busily employed with many other weighty affaires, as his coronation, etc.," write the English visitors, "the Rajah assured us that we might now trade securely in all his Dominions without the least apprehension of evil from him."

The coronation was performed at first according to the Vedic rites, then according to the Tantric. Shivaji was anxious to satisfy all sections of his subjects. There was some doubt about his Kshatriya origin (see note at the end of this chapter). This was of more than academic interest to his contemporaries, especially Brahmans. Traditionally considered the highest caste in the Hindu social hierarchy, the Brahmans would submit to Shivaji, and officiate at his coronation, only if his Kshatriyahood were established. So learned pundits from Benares were consulted and one of them, Gaga Bhat, conducted the ceremonials as high priest. It is interesting to find an echo of this in a contemporary Dutch record: "Taking into consideration that Suasy could not be crowned unless he first became a Kettery, and that he had promised not to act or rule tyrannically and badly as before(?), on 8th of June last, they granted him the caste of Kettery;... but he also demanded to be taught the Brahman rule(?). This, however, they refused, but one of the chief of them complied". Sir Jadunath Sarkar has estimated the total cost of the coronation as 10 lakhs of *hons* or 50 lakhs of rupees.

5. Shivaji and the Sultans

We noted before that Shivaji had to struggle against the Mughal Empire on the one hand, and the Sultans of the

Deccan on the other. Owing to Aurangzeb's preoccupations in the North and the ineptitude of his generals in the South, Shivaji had a more or less free hand to deal with his other enemies in the Deccan, during the remaining six years of his life (1674-80). Before he could consider himself safe, he had to make himself supreme in the entire southern peninsula. He concentrated on this objective soon after his coronation.

There were two principal Muslim powers in the Deccan with a long history behind them. They were Bijapur and Golkonda, both of which were offshoots of the old Bahmani kingdom. When in the time of Shah Jahan the Nizamshahi of Ahmadnagar was extinguished, in 1636, the Qutb Shah and the Adil Shah little imagined that a like fate would overtake them at the hands of Shah Jahan's son Aurangzeb. Yet the inevitable dissolution of the two States came about in 1686-87. Before that happened, however, they tried to aggrandise themselves at the expense of the remnants of the Vijayanagar Empire in the South, unmindful of the dangers from Mughal Imperialism in the North. The part played by Shahji (Shivaji's father) in that southward expansion of the Sultans of the Deccan has already been described. Before his death in 1664, Shahji had acquired important estates in the South, like Bangalore and Ginji. His son Vyankoji had added Tanjore to these, in 1675. But they were all held by Shivaji's half-brother as *jagirs* under Bijapur. For the newly proclaimed Chhatrapati of the Marathas, this seemed a very anomalous position. He, therefore, determined on extending his hegemony, if not direct sway, as far south as Tanjore. If Vyankoji had willingly acquiesced in that idea there might have been a peaceful way to its realisation. As it happened, however, he appeared to be quite satisfied as a vassal of Bijapur. Shivaji consequently organised a military campaign to achieve his end. What would be Bijapur's reactions to this?

Since the overthrow of Afzal Khan at Pratapgad (1659), Shivaji's star was on the ascendant. Bijapur felt greatly mortified, but the scales had definitely turned in favour of the Marathas. Shivaji invaded the Konkan and established his hold there, down to the borders of Kanara. Latterly, in spite of his hostile attitude towards the Mughal Empire, he had even co-operated with Mughal generals in the reduction of Bijapur. In November 1772, when Ali Adil Shah II died, he made capital out of the minority of the next ruler, Sikandar, and the factious discontent within Bijapur against the dictatorship of Khawas Khan who was regent. He recaptured Panhala, on 6th March 1673, which he had won and lost in 1660. After his coronation, he bought off

the Mughal general Bahadur Khan, and turned to an alliance with Qutb Shah of Golkonda against their common rival and enemy Bijapur. For Shivaji the time was opportune. During the minority of Sikandar Shah, and the regency of Khawas Khan, the squabbles of the Abyssinian and Afghan parties came to a head, and, in January 1676, Khawas Khan was murdered. Khizr Khan, the right hand man of the next dictator, also met with a like fate soon after. The Mughals taking advantage of the situation opened a fresh offensive against that hapless kingdom at the end of May 1676. Shivaji was thus free to carry out his plans in the South with impunity.

He marched to Golkonda with a well disciplined force of 50,000 horse. The Qutb Shah received him well, from mixed motives of fear on the one side, and hopes of advantages to be gained from such an alliance on the other, both against Bijapur and the Mughals. Abul Hassan felt, no doubt, like the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah in the presence of Nadir Shah in 1739. He agreed to send with Shivaji an auxiliary force of 5,000 troops with full equipment and a train of artillery, besides paying a heavy subsidy of 3,000 *hons* a day during the period of the campaign. Shivaji promised to transfer to the Qutbshahi such parts of his conquests as had not belonged to his father Shahji, in return for an annual tribute of one *lakh* of *hons*. Qutb Shah also agreed to entertain a Maratha ambassador at his Court.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar has attributed this campaign of Shivaji to his financial needs caused by the extravagant expenditure on his coronation. Contemporary European records, however, indicate that Sarkar has exaggerated the prospects of obtaining riches in the peninsula. Owing to the chronic state of warfare caused by the Bijapur invasions, on the one side, and the contests between the Nayaks on the other, one of them states: "Everywhere only devastation, and solitude, and death are seen; a part of the inhabitants have succumbed to starvation; others have left their country to seek relief elsewhere. Day by day, Ekoji (Vyankoji) on the one hand, and the king of Mysore, on the other, will absorb the *debris* of this kingdom, once so flourishing. The conquest of it will be very easy, for the people will regard the enemy, whoever he may be, as their true saviour".

An entry in the Dutch Register, dated 2nd October 1677, reads: "Siwagie is now with his army in the country of Mysore, not far from the capitals of the princes of Madure and Tansjour from which places he threatens the whole of Visiapour (i.e., territories belonging to Bijapur). People

are of the opinion that he will now make himself Master (of the country), for the Golconda authorities, on the whole, will not do other than what he wants, but try to satisfy him only with pretty words. He had already a quarrel with his brother Egosia Rajia (the present ruler of Tansjour) over the estates left by their father Sahasy, so that he took possession of those lands for himself".

It is only necessary to add here that Shavaji reinstated his brother in Tanjore and contented himself with having asserted his supremacy over his patrimony. Tanjore continued to be governed by the descendants of Shahji for over a century after this, earning a reputation for good government. "The Ruler Egosie Ragia," the Dutch observed, "is now-a-days in peaceful possession of the countries of Tansjour, more by the prestige of his brother Sewagie Ragia than by his own strength". Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar has pointed out that thereby Shivaji stood forth as the successor to Vijayanagar, as the defender of Hindu civilisation in the South. He was now virtually lord of the peninsula, as Aurangzeb was in the plains of Hindusthan. In the struggle that was to ensue for supremacy over the whole of India, Shivaji's southern conquests, particularly Ginji, were to prove of very great use to his successors.

The Siddis of Janjira were important auxiliaries of Muslim rule in the South; they were vassals of Bijapur but also supported the Imperial interests of the Mughals on the western seaboard. Shivaji had taken notice of their activities as early as 1657, and even conquered a part of the Konkan from them. While Shivaji held the eastern portions of Kolaba district, the Siddis were in possession of the western parts. Hence conflict between the two was inevitable. The Siddis were a thorn in the side of Shivaji's kingdom. Sabhasad calls them 'mice in the house', whereas the English described them as "pirates and rogues" who "maintain vessels abroad to rob all that they master". While Shivaji succeeded in capturing Danda-Rajapuri, their stronghold on the mainland opposite the island fortress of Janjira, he could not hold it for long. It was his lifelong ambition to crush them, but in spite of his most determined efforts in that direction they succeeded in outliving Shivaji as well as all his successors. This was due to the fact that when they were hardpressed by the Marathas, and Bijapur failed to send reinforcements, they wrote to the English at Bombay that they were "resolved to hold out to the last, and then deliver it (Janjira) up to the Mughal". This they actually did eventually to save themselves. On the other hand, when Shivaji approached the English for assistance against the Siddis, their President and Council at Surat

advised the Bombay factors "not to positively promise him the grenadoes, mortar-pieces, and ammunition he desires, nor to absolutely deny him, in regard we do not think it convenient to help him against Danda, which place if it were in his possession would prove a great annoyance to the port of Bombay".

There is abundant evidence of such duplicity, on the part of the English as well as the Portuguese, in the contemporary records. In their anxiety to secure and safeguard their interests, they were afraid of incurring the wrath of the established Muslim powers and too sceptical of the newly risen Maratha, though Shivaji had repeatedly given them certitude of his good intentions towards them. On 24th May 1663, Gyfford wrote to Surat: "All the way, as he (Shivaji) goes along, he gives his *qaul* (undertaking) promising them that neither he nor his soldiers shall in the least do any wrong to anybody that takes his *qaul*, which promise he hitherto hath kept". Nevertheless, the Europeans, while outwardly professing friendship towards Shivaji, repeatedly gave evidence, in practice, of their hostile attitude. He therefore felt constrained to wage war against them. His capture and occupation of the twin islands of Khanderi-Underi ("Henry-Kenry") off Bombay, after a stiff naval struggle with the combined forces of the Siddis and the English—in league with the Portuguese—revealed that the Marathas could be as intrepid on the sea as they were on land. This took place between 3rd September 1679 and 28th January 1680. Shivaji died on Sunday, 4th April, following (1680). "Amidst these Wars, and rumours of Wars", wrote Dr. Fryer commenting on the recent incident, "we quietly laid down our Arms and leave Seva Gi and Syddy alone to contend for our stony piece of Ground on Henry Kenry."

Many eloquent tributes have been paid to the genius of Shivaji. It is not necessary to recount all of them here. His political contributions, in the shape of building up the Maratha State, will be assessed later. His military achievements in the face of heavy odds proclaim him as one of the greatest creators of armies as well as strategists of the world. In nobility of character and chivalrous conduct in war few generals of any time or country would bear favourable comparison with him. But his greatest achievement was that he created a *nation* out of the scattered, dis-united and mercenary Maratha peasantry which had been thoroughly exploited and tyrannised over by the Muslim rulers. The ground had been prepared, no doubt, earlier by forces we have assessed already. Yet the people and country needed leadership to focus these trends and direct

them effectively towards the attainment of national ends. This was the specific service rendered by the unique genius of Shivaji. As I have written elsewhere, "He was the embodiment of the spirit of his age and country and gave direction and shape to the power that had already come into existence. Shivaji was great because he thoroughly understood his people, their needs, aspirations and character. He was great because he had the larger vision and capacity to exploit the situation fully for the everlasting glory of Maharashtra. Maratha *Svarajya* which was the combined product of all these forces, individual and national, bore distinct marks of the Maratha genius."*

6. *The Struggle for Survival*

The Maratha people underwent great trials during the twenty-seven years following the death of Shivaji (1680-1707). Aurangzeb turned the full glare of his attention on them during this period and expanded all his resources in a conclusive struggle with the Marathas. But the Marathas not only emerged successful but were found strong enough in the end to turn the tide against the northern Imperialists. No better evidence than this can be cited to establish that the rise of the Maratha power was no mere accident or a temporary upheaval created by the genius of a single superman like Shivaji; it was the upsurge of a nation in arms fighting in defence of its freedom and culture. At least so it was during the life-time of Shivaji and his two immediate successors: Sambhaji and Rajaram (1680-1700). It continued to be so for another dozen years (1700-12) when Maharashtra was fighting with its back to the wall, kingless but not leaderless. The Marathas fought like the Dutch, in another part of the world, but about the same time, against the Hapsburg and Bourbon Imperialists. Aurangzeb, like his contemporary Louis XIV, had to acknowledge defeat in this duel. "My armies were employed against Shiva," he confessed, "for nineteen years, but nevertheless his State has always been increasing".

Sambhaji, the eldest son of Shivaji, was unlike his great father in most respects, except courage. He was cruel, too deeply engrossed in pleasures of the flesh, and rash, though equally determined to carry on the struggle against the Mughal. As a prince he had been once tempted by Diler Khan to desert to the enemy. Since then he had been in prison, and was released just in time to secure the throne for himself against his younger half-brother Rajaram. Soirabai, his step-mother, and others suspected of the

* *Maratha History Re-examined*, p.272.

plot against his accession were exterminated with the cruelty associated with the Mughal succession disputes. Having disgusted and alienated many of his father's loyal servants by these deeds, he fell more and more under the pernicious influence of his boon companion Kavi Kalash—a North Indian adventurer.

Aurangzeb, alive to all the opportunities afforded to him by such an internal situation, made capital out of it. On the other hand, his rebellious son, Prince Akbar, in whose pursuit he had initially come into the Deccan, was a fugitive in the Maratha camp. But Akbar was not much of a help to the Marathas and he faded out of the picture when he sailed away to Masqat in an English vessel in February 1687, from Vengurla. Though Bijapur and Golkonda were lifelong enemies of the Marathas, they occasionally co-operated with them either from a sense of common danger or in order to gain some temporary advantage. Sambhaji generously responded to gestures of amity. Aurangzeb cited this as evidence when he drew up his charge sheet against the Sultans of the Deccan. In his eyes co-operation with the hated infidels was a heinous crime. Still more unpardonable was the fact that the rulers of Bijapur and Golkonda professed the Shiah creed. Whatever the excuse, the Imperial wolf had decided on devouring the Deccan lambs; they were finished off, as noticed elsewhere, in 1686-87. This exposed the flanks of the Maratha kingdom to direct attack from Mughal armies. Aurangzeb could now, however speciously, claim hegemony over the whole southern peninsula, as successor to the two Sultans.

On the western flank, Sambhaji had to face the open hostility of the Siddis, and the insidious hostility of the Portuguese. The English, too, if not declared enemies, were afraid to be friendly, as hitherto. The result was that Sambhaji was encircled on all sides, and caught in the Imperial net. In 1689, after a desperate though heroic struggle, Aurangzeb destroyed him with a cruelty calculated to strike terror into the hearts of his people, and took captive his family and infant son Shivaji (later on called Shahu). This tragedy was enacted at Koregaon on the Bhima (12 miles North-East of Poona), on 11th March 1689. The sequel once more proved that the strength of Maharashtra was not confined within the personality of its kingly ruler. The Italian Manucci, an eye-witness of these events, observed:

It seemed as if the death of Sambhaji was bound to secure Aurangzeb's lordship over all the lands of Hindusthan down to the sea. But the commanders of valourous Shivaji, father of this unfortunate man, were by this

time practised in fighting the Mughals, and expert in the way of dealing with these foreigners who deserted from his side. They determined to continue the campaign and uphold the cause of Ram Raja, younger brother of the deceased. Therefore they took him out of prison and made him their Prince... Thus in 1689 the war recommenced with great fury. It was not enough for Aurangzeb to have made himself master of Bijapur and Golkonda; he must needs oppress a little prince who yet was strong enough to compel so potent a King to remain away from his kingdom (i.e. Hindusthan) and dwell in camp merely to prevent the loss of his previous conquests.

Rajaram was a feeble young man compared with his fiery brother. He was not cast in the heroic mould of either Shivaji or Sambhaji. Nevertheless he supplied a royal pivot on which the nascent State might turn. It had seven strong spokes in the persons of Ramchandrapant (the great *Amatya*), Shankraji Narayan, Parushram Tryambak, Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav, Khando Ballal (*Chitnis*) and Prahlad Niraji. They were men of "drive and decision, of courage and character, of brawn as well as brain". They constituted veritable Pillars of the State, such as to save it from crumbling into dust under the sledge-hammer strokes of the Mughal Emperor. The heroic and protracted struggle that ensued would demand a volume to itself, full of battles and sieges, attacks and counter-attacks, strongholds lost and won and lost again.

On 19th October 1689, Raigad, the capital itself, was occupied by Zulfiqar Khan (Mughal general), and Rajaram had to flee, at first to Pratapgad, thence to Panhala, and finally to Ginji which he reached on 15th November 1689. He was obliged to remain there until November 1697. Meanwhile the struggle was carried on all over the dominions of the Marathas under the grand command of the *Amatya* who was made *Hukmat Panah* or dictator. A Fort St. George record, dated 14th November 1689, reads: "Rajaram's designs of coming hither being reported to divert the Mugull's army from thence and joine with severall Gentue Naigues and raise a considerable army to retake the Golcondah and Vizapore Kingdoms, wch. there is great probability of, both places being at present very weakly guarded." A letter of Khando Ballal *Chitnis*, dated 22nd March 1690, confirms: "Since Rajaram reached Karnatak, 40,000 cavalry and 1,25,000 foot-soldiers have joined him; more are coming. The hereditary Poligars of that province have all come over to him. It has become an impressive rally." This culminated in the protracted siege

of Ginji by the Imperial forces, until Rajafam fled to the North in November 1697.

Aurangzeb's failure was partly due to the intrepidity of the Maratha generals, like Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav, and partly the outcome of the dishonesty and mutual jealousies of the Mughal officers. Finally, disgusted with the way the campaign was being conducted, the Emperor decided to take the leadership into his own hands. But even that did not improve matters. He captured many of the fortresses in the Maratha country, but lost the war. Rajaram, after his return home, organised incursions into the Imperial provinces of the Deccan. He invaded the Godavari valley, raided as far as Khandesh and Berar, and left his own generals there to collect *chauth* and *sardesh-mukhi*. While at Jalna, S.-E. of Aurangabad, he suddenly took ill and was obliged to seek rest in the fort of Simhagad (Poona) where he died on 2nd March 1700. "The difficulties of Aurangzeb were only multiplied," observes Sarkar, "by the disappearance of a common head and a central government among the Marathas, as every Maratha captain with his own retainers fought and raided in a different quarter and on his own account. It now became a people's war, and Aurangzeb could not end it, because there was no Maratha Government or State army for him to attack and destroy... It was not a simple military problem but had become a trial of endurance and resources between the Mughal Empire and the indigenous people of the Deccan... They were no longer a tribe of banditti or local rebels, but the one dominating factor of Deccan politics, the only enemy left to the Empire, and yet an enemy all-pervasive, from Bombay to Madras across the Indian peninsula, elusive as the wind, without any headman or stronghold whose capture would naturally result in the extinction of that power."

Aurangzeb died in the Deccan on Friday, 20th February 1707. This gave a great fillip to the Maratha movement northwards. The situation is best summed up in the words of the Imperial historian Khafi Khan: "When Ram Raja died, leaving only widows and infants, men thought that the power of the Marathas over the Dakhin was at an end. But Tarabai, the elder wife of Ram Raja, made her son of three years old successor of his father, and took the reins of Government into her own hands. She took vigorous measures for ravaging the Imperial territory, and sent armies to plunder the six *subahs* of the Dakhin as far as Sironj, Mandisor, and the *subah* of Malwa. She won the hearts of her officers, and for all the struggles and schemes,

the campaigns and sieges of Aurangzeb up to the end of his reign, the power of the Maratha increased day by day."

NOTE: THE BHONSLE FAMILY AND THE MARATHAS

For a correct appreciation of the social aspects of Maratha history it is helpful to know something of the family to which Shivaji belonged, and the denotation (if not also the connotation) of the term "Maratha". Shivaji's father Shahji has been referred to in the text as Shahji Bhonsle. This surname is variously derived by scholars from Bhosaji, a remote ancestor or Bhose, name of a village where the family was long settled. More important for us is the question whether the Bhonsles were Kshatriyas or Marathas. Tradition traces their origin to the Sisodia rulers of Mewar (Rajputana). Certain Adilshahi *firman*s in the possession of the Ghorpade ruling family of Mudhol (Southern Maratha Country) allude to this ancestry. The Ghorpades are a collateral elder branch of the Bhonsle family. "Ghorpad" is the *iguana* (kind of lizard) with the help of which a member of this family is supposed to have scaled a fort and captured it, as Tanaji Malusare did at Simhagad. Ghorpade was the title the Adil Shah conferred on one of the Bhonsles for that distinguished service.

Shahji's forefathers appear to have migrated from Rajputana and settled down in the Deccan, near Ellora and Daulatabad, in the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Under the Nizamshahi, an off-shoot of the Bahmanis, they acquired political importance, particularly from the marriage of Shahji with Jijabai a daughter of Lukhji Jadhavrao who claimed descent from the Yadava rulers of Devgiri (Daulatabad). The political career of Shahji has been described in the text.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar discredits this story of Rajput origin of the Bhonsles, and considers the family to have become one of the local Maratha tribes or clans. The question is too controversial to be satisfactorily dealt with here. The controversy is as old at least as the coronation of Shivaji. For all practical purposes it was then settled in favour of the Rajput origin, inasmuch as authoritative Brahman opinion accepted it as true. Otherwise the Brahmans might not have conducted the coronation ceremonies. Against this however, it is urged that Shivaji's *upanayana* (investiture with the sacred thread worn by the "twice born") was performed only at the coronation when he was already long married and not at the proper age, earlier and before marriage. The Brahman acknowledgement of Shivaji's Kshatriyahood is therefore taken as political. The passage

from the Dutch records cited in the text seems to suggest the plausibility of this argument.

'Maratha' and 'Maharashtra' are interconnected words. Maharashtra literally means "great country". It is historically traced to the epics and ancient epigraphs wherein Maha-rattas or Maha-rathikas are named. In current usage, a Maratha is one who speaks Marathi as his mother-tongue. Inside Maharashtra, however, a distinction is made between the Maratha caste and other castes such as Brahman, Prabhu, etc. Among the Marathas, in this sense, there are subdivisions like Kunbi, Ramoshi, Koli, etc. Political achievements raised some of these Marathas to high rank and even royal status: e.g. Holkar (ruler of Indore) was originally a *Dhangar* or shepherd. The Peshwas were Brahmans.

The Maratha power was consequently the work of the total efforts of all classes of people living in the territory called Maharashtra and speaking the Marathi language, and not only of the Marathas in the narrower caste-sense of the term. [The introduction to Grant Duff's *A History of the Mahrattas*, by S. M. Edward (O.U.P. 1921) deals with these social aspects, though the conclusions drawn there may not be taken as absolutely correct or final.]

CHAPTER NINE

THE BID FOR EMPIRE

1. *Shahu and Tarabai.* 2. *Rise of the Peshvas.* 3. *Bajirao I and Maratha Expansion.* 4. *The Debacle of Panipat.* 5. *The Recovery under Madhavrao I.* 6. *The Climax under Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnavis.*

1. *Shahu and Tarabai*

THE activities of the Marathas under Tarabai, widow of Rajaram, referred to by Khafi Khan (cited at the close of last chapter) were soon to be interrupted by the clever strategy of the Imperialists. When Aurangzeb died, and the Mughal princes were, as usual, engaged in a deadly struggle for the throne, they thought of securing themselves from Maratha incursions by releasing Shahu, son of Sambhaji, and using him as a counterpoise against Tarabai. It may be recalled that, after the execution of Sambhaji in 1689, his infant son Shivaji (later on called Shahu) and family were taken captive by the Emperor. The young Maratha prince had since been brought up at the Mughal Court in an atmosphere of luxury and ease. In the meanwhile Rajaram succeeded to his unfortunate brother's throne and carried on the struggle against the Mughals to some purpose, as we witnessed in the preceding pages. His death in 1700 had made no difference for the Maratha resistance, as Aurangzeb very soon realised. The son of Rajaram, in whose name Tarabai carried on the struggle (1700-1707) was an imbecile called Shivaji II. Shahu, being the son of the elder brother, might be deemed to have had superior claims over his cousin. Moreover, even during the lifetime of Rajaram, that amiable prince, though actually ruling in his own right, had given expression to sentiments which made it appear that he was only acting as regent in the absence of Shahu, the rightful heir to the throne of Sambhaji. It was, therefore, a shrewd move on the part of Zulfiqar Khan when he suggested that Shahu released might prove more helpful to the Imperial interests than Shahu captive at the Mughal Court. The calculation proved correct.

The entry of Shahu into the Deccan, in the middle of 1707, was an invitation to civil war. The intrepid Tarabai would not brook his intervention or take it lying down. She declared Shahu an imposter, and also asserted that her own son had in any case infinitely superior claims. But it was very soon patent that the issue could be settled only

by force of arms. The imperious nature of Tarabai had already alienated several of her officers and ministers. Consequently, when the two armies met at Khed, in November 1707, the defection of Dhanaji Jadhav, Tarabai's commander, turned the tide in favour of her unwanted nephew. By the following January, Shahu occupied Satara where he got himself crowned, as a rival to Shivaji II. Here he ruled, or rather reigned as we shall presently see, during the next 41 years, 1708-49. They were years of internal discord and external aggrandisement for the Marathas: for, so long as Tarabai lived she would not remain idle, while the restless spirit of the Marathas found vent in their fateful northern drive under the Peshvas. Before we turn to the history of the expansionist movement, we might briefly notice the character of the discord within the Maratha State.

Maharashtra at this time was a house divided against itself. Not only was it split up into two antagonistic sub-states with Shahu at the head of one (at Satara) and Shivaji II, or really Tarabai, at the head of the other (at Kolhapur), but there were internal factions within each of these divisions. Rajaram at his death had left another widow (besides Tarabai) named Rajasbai. Her son, Sambhaji II, very soon succeeded in usurping power, putting Tarabai and her son into prison. This dissolute prince proved a source of perpetual trouble to Shahu, as he played into the hands of the astute Nizam, who tried to make capital out of the divisions within the Maratha ruling family. Ultimately, however, Sambhaji was reconciled to Shahu, in February 1731, largely on account of the inherent goodness of that monarch. By the treaty of Warna it was settled that Sambhaji should rule over the southern division of the Maratha kingdom—between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers—with Kolhapur as its capital, and the northern parts should be considered the preserve of Shahu.

There were deadly feuds among the ministers and generals as well, but we cannot describe all of them here. One scandalous consequence of this was seen in the conduct of Chandrasen Jadhav (son of Dhanaji Jadhav who had gone over to Shahu at the battle of Khed). Though invested with the command of the army, in succession to his father, after Dhanaji's death, Chandrasen proved a traitor to Shahu and joined Tarabai. Later he intrigued with the Nizam and continued to act in perpetual hostility towards his own people. Other instances of Maratha factionousness are afforded by the feuds between the Peshva and the Pratinidhi on the one side, and the Peshva and the Senapati on the other. The latter ended in the overthrow

of the Senapati (Trimbakrao Dabhade) by Bajirao, on 1st April 1731, at Dabhai in Gujarat. Dabhade's death on the battlefield was, however, regarded as retribution for his unpatriotic intrigues (like Chandrasen Jadhav's) with the Nizam.

Shahu's own household was not free from disruptive quarrels. There was no love lost between his two wives, Sakwarbai, the elder, and Sagunabai, the younger. Their jealousies came to a head when Shahu appeared to be reaching his end without leaving any heir of his body to succeed him. "The elder queen," writes Chitnis (Shahu's Secretary), "without obeying the King, began to intrigue, and formed a separate party with the Pratinidhi and Yamaji Shivdev, so that she might adopt a son of her own choice." We need not follow the whole tale. Shahu himself, desirous of leaving the kingdom to a descendant of the great Shivaji, and also bridging the gulf between himself and Tarabai (whom he still called "Aayee" or mother), decided on the adoption of Ram Raja, a supposititious son of Shivaji II, who was preferred by Tarabai. To cut a long story short, Shahu died in the midst of these unedifying quarrels of his queens, on 15th December 1749; and Ram Raja was crowned Chhatrapati on 4th January 1750. When Tarabai discovered that the new prince, far from being a tool in her own hands, fell into the grip of the Peshva, she openly denounced him as a "fake" foisted by herself on the credulous Shahu as a "practical joke"!

"Next to the great founder Shivaji, Shahu played the most important part in the development of the Maratha State," writes Sardesai. This verdict would be historically correct if we qualified it with: "in the House of Shivaji", for the two Peshvas, Bajirao I and Madhavrao I were, otherwise, better entitled to that description. Nevertheless Shahu did render a great service to the development of Maratha power. He provided the much needed unifying centre to the otherwise centrifugal State. Pious and benevolent in his private life, he exercised a wholesome personal influence on men and affairs in spite of his natural disinclination for outdoor pursuits. His greatest gift to his country was his discovery of the Peshvas and the patronage he bestowed upon them. Tarabai, on the other hand, despite her vigorous and inspiring leadership in the earlier days of crisis, ultimately proved too sinister an influence and malevolent to the Maratha cause.

2. Rise of the Peshvas

The Peshvas were ministers of the Chhatrapati or Maratha Raja. In the time of Shivaji and his immediate successors

the office was not officially hereditary, but it became so under Shahu. This was due to the personal relationship between Shahu and Balaji Vishvanath Bhat, the founder of this famous family of rulers. The character and capacity of Balaji and the peculiar circumstances of the country, favoured the rise of the Peshvas to power and renown. Like the Imperial house of the Mughals, the family of the Peshvas was fortunate in producing an able line of successors. But unlike the great Mughal Emperors, the Peshvas suffered from the curse of premature death. They suddenly emerged from the obscurity of Shrivardhan, a village in Janjira State, and became, within a few years, *de facto* inheritors of the political legacy of the great Shivaji. We shall study their careers chiefly from the point of view of the making of Modern India.

The first authentic reference to Balaji Vishvanath, found in the family records of the Peshvas, belongs to the year 1696. He was then Sabhasad of Prant Poona. From 1699 to 1702 he was *Sar Subahdar* in the same place, and next at Daulatabad between 1704-07. He distinguished himself in the civil administration as well as military affairs, being associated with the commander Dhanaji Jadhav. Having proved himself of very great use to Shahu, and being instrumental in securing his release and return to Maharashtra, he naturally became the righthand man of the new Chhatrapati. At his coronation, in January 1708, Shahu conferred upon him the title of *Sena-karte* (maker of the army). Eventually he rose to be Peshva in 1713.

One of the first things Balaji was called upon to do, in the service of his Chhatrapati, was to secure the restoration of Shahu's mother to him, from the custody of the Mughals. She had been detained at Delhi as hostage for the good behaviour of her son, when Shahu was released in 1707. If he went to the Imperial capital on that account, he could also get confirmation of the grant of *chauth* and *sardesh-mukhi* from those who were then in effective power at Delhi. The need for this arose on account of the counter-claims that Tarabai was pressing through her own agents with the Emperor and the kaleidoscopic changes that were taking place so rapidly in the North, as we have noticed elsewhere. Balaji Vishvanath was shrewd enough to back the winning horse. He supported the Saiyid brothers in their role of King-Makers.

Khafi Khan describes Balaji Vishvanath as one of the "most intelligent generals of Raja Shahu". He did not go to Delhi as a mere suppliant for the grant to Shahu. He was accompanied by Khanderao Dabhade, Santaji Bhonsle and a force of 16,000 Maratha horse. But for these impres-

sive reinforcements, the Saiyids may not have ventured to bring about the palace revolution as precipitately as they did. At the end of February 1719, they witnessed the tragic end of the Emperor Farrukh-siyar. The new puppet Rafi-ud-Darajat rewarded the Marathas with all that Balaji demanded: Shahu's mother and family were released; Shahu was recognised as ruler of Shivaji's home dominions, including the possessions in Karnatak (Bangalore, Tanjore, etc.); and he was allowed to collect *chauth* and *sardesh-mukhi* in the six *subahs* of the Deccan (i.e. Khandesh, Berar, Aurangabad, Bidar, Golkonda and Bijapur). In return for all this, the Marathas were expected to maintain a contingent of 15,000 horse in the service of the Emperor and maintain order in the Deccan. It is needless to add, the Marathas were glad to have this opportunity.

It may be recalled that, during the last days of Rajaram, the Marathas had already commenced their depredations in those provinces. By the admission of the Imperial historian Khafi Khan, under Tarabai's direction, they had spread their activities as far as Malwa and Sironj in Central India. Balaji had himself raided Gujarat soon after the death of Aurangzeb and levied a tribute of Rs. 2,10,000. Husain Ali, before he found it expedient to make friends with the Marathas, had realised how powerful the Marathas already were in the Deccan. The Imperial grants, therefore, did no more than regularise the *de facto* position of the Marathas. Nevertheless their recognition, or formal confirmation, by the Emperor was a great gain. It at once converted the Marathas from the status of mere marauders into authorised agents of the sovereign of Delhi. Furthermore, it made some difference when the wheel of fate turned again and another Emperor sat on the throne. When the astute and powerful Nizam-ul-Mulk became viceroy of Muhammad Shah, he would not leave the Marathas in any enjoyment of their gains. Yet the Marathas proved more than a match for him, as we shall see in the next section.

Balaji Vishvanath did not long survive his strenuous journey to Delhi. He returned in June 1719, and died on 2nd April 1720. But he had witnessed with his own eyes the rotten state of affairs in the heart of the Mughal Empire. The Marathas were very soon to make capital out of that experience. He had also rendered valuable services to Shahu in the settlement of his home affairs. He had either suppressed or brought round recalcitrant persons like Khataokar and Kanhoji Angre to the side of Shahu. The power of Tarabai was overthrown even in Kolhapur, by the support given to her rival Rajasbai and her son Sambhaji. He reorganised the finances, created a legitimate

field in the Mughal provinces for the most turbulent Marathas to lay the foundations of Maratha Empire, and thereby gave definite shape and direction to the chaotic inheritance of Shahu. More than anything else, he made the Peshva the most important officer and minister in the Maratha State. Out of sheer gratitude Shahu appointed his youthful son Bajirao, who was then just twenty years of age (born on 18th August 1700), as the next Peshva.

Bajirao justified the choice by his extraordinary brilliance, and thereby earned for his own son, Balaji Bajirao, the title to succeed as the third Peshva. Shahu was thus unconsciously led into making that important office hereditary, against the wholesome contrary principle laid down by his grandfather Shivaji. As a matter of fact, before his death, Shahu blessed Balaji Bajirao and assured him: "We hope and believe that you will ably conduct the administration of this kingdom... Our blessings rest on you. Our successors will continue you in office." We have already indicated how this benediction came to be fulfilled. Ram Raja, the adopted son of Shahu, placed himself entirely in the Peshva's hands repudiating his godmother Tarabai. By what is known as the "Sangola Agreement" (1750), he bestowed large estates on Balaji Bajirao and his supporters. "The new arrangements," observes Prof. H. N. Sinha, "bring out quite clearly one vital fact, and that is the unrivalled supremacy of the Peshva. He had crushed the Pratinidhi, conciliated Raghuji Bhonsle, reduced the Dabhade to insignificance, disarmed Tarabai and had the King under his thumb." Though Tarabai rebelled against this supremacy of the Peshva for a time and took possession of the prince by a *coup de'tat*, she very soon realised that the King was only a shadow and that all real authority was wielded by the Peshva. Hence she finally made friends with Balaji and swore in the temple of Jejuri (to wreak a woman's revenge upon the innocent Ram Raja) that the prince was really a foundling! But the ironical result was that that declaration only increased the importance of her rival, the Peshva, and reduced the Chhatrapati to a contemptible phantom.

To appreciate how the Peshvas carved a niche for themselves in the temple of the great, we should go back to Bajirao I. The glory of the house of the Peshvas chiefly rests on two pillars: the personalities of Bajirao I (1720-40) and his grandson Madhavrao I (1761-72).

3. Bajirao I and Maratha Expansion

A great controversy centres upon the policy (or impolicy) of the Maratha expansion northwards. The alternatives

were hotly debated at the Court of Raja Shahu. Sripatrao Pratinidhi tried to make out a plausible case in support of concentration in the South and consolidation of the Maratha position in the Deccan. But the young, impetuous and ambitious Bajirao strongly advocated immediately "striking at the trunk" and bringing down the withered tree of the Mughal Empire at a single stroke, instead of wasting time in the leisurely business of "lopping off the branches"—i.e. the provinces. The impressive simplicity of the metaphor, and the position already attained by the Marathas in the North, made the temptation irresistible. Bajirao soon gave evidence of his capacity to execute the bold plan his imagination had so ardently conceived.

Under his gifted leadership the Marathas were not launching any new venture. Shivaji's raids on Surat, Rajaram's sallies into Berar, Khandesh and Malwa, and the more recent achievements of Balaji Vishvanath, made Bajirao's proposal seem not only natural but inevitable. The Mughal Empire was fast evolving a political vacuum in North India, and the Marathas were drawn into its vortex with the momentum of a hurricane. Maratha generals had already paved the way for such a culmination.

There was, however, one great hurdle to be got over—the Nizam. He was too formidable to be ignored, and he bestrode like a colossus the path of Maratha expansion. Since the overthrow of the Saiyid brothers, in 1720, Nizam-ul-Mulk had grown in importance and power. The Mughal Emperor, Muhammad Shah, discovered that the Irani Nawab Vazir of Oudh (Saadat Khan) barked more than he could bite. Hence he relied more and more on the astute and capable Nizam-ul-Mulk. This Turani nobleman, whose rise and establishment in the Deccan as a semi-independent ruler we described in an earlier chapter, could nevertheless afford but partial protection to his Imperial master. This became evident from the results of his encounters with Bajirao on the one side, and the invasion of Nadir Shah, in 1738-9, on the other. He proved to be more astute as a diplomat than capable as a general. Bajirao worsted him twice on the battlefield at Palkhed in February 1728 and at Bhopal in December 1737, and by the conventions of Mungi Shevgaon and Durai Sarai, respectively, enforced the claims of Shahu.

The diplomatic manoeuvres of the Nizam aimed at the division of the Marathas into two hostile camps: Sambhaji of Kolhapur *vs.* Shahu of Satara, and the diversion of Bajirao and his formidable avalanche of Maratha troops away from the Deccan where he was building up his independent power—whatever might happen to the Mughal

Empire. He was therefore perpetually intriguing with Sambhaji and Maratha generals like Trimbakrao Dabhade and Chandrasen Jadhav. At Mungi Shevgaom he was obliged to recognise the claims of Shahu to the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the six *subahs* of the Deccan, and also to cease supporting Sambhaji. But though coerced on the battlefield, he never intended to act according to his undertakings. He shifted his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad in order to be at a safer distance from Maratha arms, and pretended to give Bajirao a free hand in his northern adventures. Actually he continued his occupation of creating a division in the ranks of the Marathas. Trimbakrao Dabhade, who was lured into these machinations paid for it with his life on the stricken field of Dabhaj (in Gujarat), on 1st April 1731. Bajirao always struck swiftly and effectively on the battlefield. Shahu, at the same time, permanently secured Sambhaji for his vassal by the treaty of Warna, according to which he agreed to confine his interests to the region south of the Krishna-Warna junction, as stated before. The Nizam, on the contrary, drew upon himself another hammer stroke of Bajirao, at Bhopal in December 1737—as punishment for his failure to keep faith with the Marathas.

The events which led up to Bhopal may be briefly told. Nizam-ul-Mulk was at one time Governor of Gujarat and Malwa. When he ultimately concentrated on the Deccan, he was obliged to withdraw even his deputies from those two provinces. Yet the new incumbents appointed by the Emperor did not find it easy to take up their assignments. Hamid Khan, the Nizam's deputy in Gujarat, for instance, still lingered in that province, and would not allow his successor to step in without a fight. The Marathas found the opportunity they wanted in these unseemly quarrels between the Imperial officers. The Dabhades and Gaikwads played a prominent part in establishing the Maratha hold in Gujarat. With Trimbakrao Dabhade's destruction by Bajirao, in 1731, the Gaikwads—ancestors of the ruling house of Baroda—gained in importance. Pilaji, the first of them, having been treacherously assassinated at an interview by the Mughal *Subahdar*, in March 1732, his place was taken by his son Damaji Gaikwad. In 1736, the title of *Sena Khas Khel* was conferred upon Damaji for his services in the consolidation of the Peshva's power in Gujarat. That title is still borne by his successors today.

In Malwa, the Mughal administration was fast crumbling. Giridhar Bahadur, its Brahman Governor was overpowered and killed in battle by Bajirao's brother Chimaji Appa, on 8th December 1728. Eventually, when Raja (Sawai) Jai

Singh of Amber was made Governor of Malwa by the Emperor, he proved too friendly to the Marathas. Through him Bajirao made important gains in Malwa, as a consequence of which the Maratha ruling houses of Dhar, Indore and Gwalior came to be founded, respectively, by Udaji Pawar, Malharrao Holkar, and Ranoji Shinde, the generals of Bajirao in Central India.

In the meanwhile, Maratha troops were pouring into the neighbouring province of Bundelkhand as well. There a conflict was going on between the native Bundela chieftain Raja Chhatrasal and the Mughal general Muhammad Khan Bangash. Chhatrasal extended an invitation to Bajirao who was only too willing to go to his assistance. The Peshva opened his campaign in that province in November 1728 with a force of 25,000 horse. Failing to obtain reinforcements from the Emperor, the Khan was compelled to compromise with the Bundelas. He was allowed to withdraw, "agreeing not to attack them again but to content himself with the tribute they formerly paid". Chhatrasal compensated Bajirao by bequeathing to him a third of his territories and stipulating that Bajirao should look on his two sons as his own brothers, and engaging the Marathas and Bundelas in a perpetual offensive-defensive alliance. Bajirao left his Bundela estates, worth 33 *lakhs* annually, in the charge of Govind Ballal Kher (a Karhada Brahman) who presently became famous as Govindpant Bundela. He was the ancestor of the renowned heroine of the Great Rising of 1857, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi.

Jai Singh's complicity in the Maratha encroachments in Central India was sought to be counteracted by the Emperor with the dispatch of Muslim generals like Muhammad Khan Bangash and Saadat Khan. With his recent experience of the Marathas in Bundelkhand, Bangash was more anxious for peaceful negotiations than prepared to cross swords with them. Bajirao, too, would have liked to secure from the Emperor formal recognition of his right to collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from the provinces already occupied by him—Malwa and Bundelkhand—if not also his actual appointment as Governor of those *subahs*. With this end in view, he opened a friendly campaign in Rajputana, so that his demands might have the sanction of a Hindu confederacy for their enforcement in case of necessity. Sawai Jai Singh was already friendly towards him. The Rana of Udaipur, though somewhat tardy in his response, was cowed into acquiescence. Others were attracted by what appeared to them a Grand Alliance of the Hindus for the overthrow of the Muslim Empire which was visibly tottering. The Mughal Emperor would have preferred

peaceful concessions to a trial of strength with the Marathas, but for the extraordinary demands made by Bajirao. "Starting with a request for the grant of the *chauth* of Malwa, and some cash to cover his expenses," writes Dr. Dighe, "the Peshva went on increasing his demands, till at last he asked for virtual control over Malwa, Bundelkhand, Bengal and the Deccan. This almost took away the breath of the Mughal Court". The challenge could, therefore, be met only on the field of battle. But the effete Empire could find no general to match Bajirao.

In the first encounter, Saadat Khan boasted to the Emperor that he had driven the Marathas with heavy losses beyond the Chambal. Bajirao, when he received reports of this, decided to call the bluff at once. "I was resolved," he wrote to his brother Chimaji, in April 1737, "to let the Emperor know the truth, to prove that I was in Hindusthan, and show him the Marathas at the gate of his capital." Yet he desisted from destructive attacks on Delhi, though he plundered and singed its environs. The reason he gave was: "An act of outrage, however, breaks the thread of politics. We therefore gave up the idea of burning the capital. . . . The chief thing to be noted is that the Emperor and Khan Dauran wish to make peace with us, while the Mughals are striving to defeat us, and Saadat Khan is at their head." After a few skirmishes Bajirao withdrew from Delhi, but continued peaceful negotiations with the Emperor through his agents. When the Nizam, who was at that time at Burhanpur in the Deccan, heard of this situation, he resolved to march against Bajirao at once. For one thing, the Emperor appeared to be in dire need of his assistance; and secondly, it was opportune to strike at his deadliest enemy while he was yet far from home. Besides, all the resources of the Empire would be at his beck and call while Saadat Khan was already roused to his pursuit. He calculated that Bajirao could be easily caught between his own forces from the South and the other Imperial forces from the North. Nonetheless Bajirao triumphed against all his enemies, and thereby revealed his extraordinary military genius.

We need not enter into the strategy and tactics that led to the utter defeat of the Nizam near Bhopal. Its political importance lies in the convention of Durai Sarai which the Nizam was compelled to sign on 7th January 1738. By it he undertook to secure for the Peshva the whole of Malwa, together with the complete sovereignty of the territory lying between the Narmada and the Chambal rivers, besides Rs. 50 lakhs as war indemnity. Though all these were promises yet to be fulfilled by confirmation of the

Emperor, as Dr. Dighe has correctly observed, "The victory of Bhopal marks the zenith of the Peshva's triumphant career. . . . By defeating the confederate armies at Bhopal the Peshva established the supremacy of Maratha arms in India and announced the birth of a new Imperial Power.

After such a brilliant victory, it is not a little surprising that Bajirao did not follow the Nizam to the capital and get immediate ratification of the convention. Instead of taking this obvious step, which was most necessary in view of the Nizam's past conduct, the Peshva frittered away his energies in punishing the Ahirs and the petty *raja* of Kotah, for their complicity with the enemy during the late war. This brought him, no doubt, some immediate cash to the extent of ten *lakhs* of rupees; but it was nothing compared with what he might have obtained from the Mughal Emperor. His presence in Delhi might possibly have also averted the holocaust which it was presently to suffer at the hands of Nadir Shah. But Bajirao chose to return to Poona, leaving his work in the North unfinished.

We have dealt with the Persian invasion and the havoc caused by it, in another chapter. Thanks to the treachery of Saadat Khan, both the Nizam and the Emperor Muhammad Shah were taken prisoner by the invader. But the traitor did not live to witness the terrible consequences of his betrayal, for before that he took poison and died. Nadir Shah himself warned the Emperor: "You are more particularly to beware of Nizam-ul-Mulk, whom, by his conduct, I find to be full of cunning and self-interested, and more ambitious than becomes a subject". Bajirao, who was otherwise preoccupied in the South, when these momentous events were happening in the heart of the Mughal Empire, awoke rather late to the danger. It was a stroke of temporary good fortune that Nadir Shah did not choose to remain in Hindusthan, like Babur, to found a new dynasty and Empire. The "trunk" of the Imperial tree which Bajirao set out to cut down at one blow had not been completely destroyed. It was to moulder on into the next century. Meanwhile, there were several unfinished tasks in the South for the Nizam and the Marathas to attend to. But Bajirao did not live to see them all completed, before his death, on Monday, 28th April 1740 (when he was still to complete his 40th year), at Raverkhedi on the bank of the Narmada.

Bajirao was a contemporary of Frederick the Great of Prussia. He died in the year of the latter's accession and attack on the hoary Austrian Empire. In their sense of opportunity and military capacity to achieve their objectives, the two resembled each other very closely. In swift-

ness of action and resourcefulness in war, the Peshva proved himself the prototype of the Prussian monarch, who was senior to him by about twelve years. We shall assess the results of his policy in another chapter. His financial incapacity is also best discussed in the context of the ultimate failure of the Peshvas. But, by his personality and qualities of leadership, Bajirao deeply impressed his contemporaries. Deep Singh, the special envoy of the Raja of Jaipur described him as "the only true leader of men among the Marathas." With the exception of Bajirao, he found "no statesman true to his word, trusted by his sovereign, beloved by his troops, and capable of shouldering heavy responsibilities." The English discovered that "treating with the Shahu Raja directly, as matters are circumstanced, would be to no purpose, as Bajirao's power is so firmly established that such a step would give him a jealousy that we were aiming at subverting his interests in these parts." Despite his other acknowledged virtues, there is no gainsaying that Bajirao was too domineering, jealous of his rivals, inclined to overlook the permanent interests of the State whose destiny he was so powerfully shaping. His appreciative and even admiring master, Shahu, was not unfair or ungrateful to him when he declared: "The Peshva has done me real service only on one occasion—in repelling the Nizam. Otherwise his activities and conquests have been for self-aggrandisement." Dr. Dighe, his latest critical biographer, has correctly judged him in terms of our national history: "But with all his achievements Bajirao cannot be hailed as a great constructive genius fit to rank with Shivaji. He made no attempt to mould or reform the political institutions of his State in a way that would benefit his people permanently."

4. *The Debacle of Panipat*

One inevitable consequence of the northern expansion of the Marathas was that they had soon to shoulder responsibilities for which they were ill equipped. Few events in their crowded annals created such a deep stir among the Marathas, and the rest of contemporary India, as their defeat at the hands of the Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali, in January 1761. To understand how this came about, and to appreciate its full significance, it is necessary to survey the entire situation in the country at that time and the place of the Marathas therein.

The major factors of the situation were: (i) that the great Mughal Empire which flourished so well during the previous century was fast and visibly crumbling, and (ii) that the Marathas were the only power that seemed strong and

important enough to be able to take its place. But the unexpected turn in the fortunes of all the native powers at the close of the eighteenth century in India revealed the fact that, behind all their hectic activities, there were other forces silently yet surely preparing the country for a different destiny. These forces were partly internal to the native powers and partly external to them. The external forces were represented by the Europeans, the Portuguese, the French and the English largely, whose advent and role are described elsewhere in this book. Suffice it to remember here that the Maratha expansion in the heart of the Mughal Empire in Hindusthan synchronised with the great duel between England and France for world supremacy. More surely than the Marathas superseded the Mughals, the English were overthrowing the French in all parts of the globe. In India the triumphs of Clive over Dupleix proclaimed the decisive ascendancy of the English over their French rivals. Dupleix died a disappointed man in 1763, the year of the treaty of Paris which closed the Seven Years' War. By that time Clive had signalised his success by his historic achievement on the battle-field of Plassey in 1757. This was soon confirmed by Munro's epoch-making victory at Buxar, over the combined forces of the fugitive Nawab of Bengal (Mir Kasim), the Nawab of Oudh (Shuja-ud-daulah), and the fugitive Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, in 1764. That culminated in the acquisition of the *Diwani* by the English East India Company, in 1765, which was the beginning of British rule in India. The events leading up to the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 should be read against the background of these more fateful happenings in other parts of India. It is not to be forgotten that, at the very moment when the fate of the Marathas was being decided on the field of Panipat (middle of January 1761), Pondicherry fell to the English. It was so thoroughly destroyed that "not a roof was left standing in this once fair and flourishing city." (Orme). Haidar Ali usurped power in Mysore during the same year (August 1761).

In spite of Bajirao's spectacular successes in the North, it must be conceded that there were good reasons for the Pratinidhi's anxiety over problems nearer home. We have already noticed the chronic troubles created by Tarabai. The internal rift caused by her selfish ambitions was not patched up until the famous Jejuri confession on oath, in 1752, that Ram Raja was only an imposter. Though this strengthened the Peshva's *de facto* power, it was not a happy position for the Maratha State to be in. Though Sambhaji II of Kolhapur had been reconciled to vassalship under Shahu, by the treaty of Warna (1731), he lived on

till 1760, and certainly had superior claims to be Chhatrapati as against the spurious Ram Raja. The Nizam was constantly alive to his opportunities until his death in 1748. That was no small source of danger to the Maratha position in the Deccan. Bajirao, in his hurry to push on with his northern ventures, had not liquidated this danger. When Nadir Shah left India, in 1739, Nizam-ul-Mulk withdrew completely from Imperial politics and concentrated on the consolidation of his dominion in the South. It was his good fortune that, just at that time, his most formidable adversary Bajirao died suddenly and prematurely, in April 1740. His son and successor, Balaji Bajirao (Nana Saheb) was still in his 'teens (born on 12th December 1721). The Marathas suffered another shock in the death of Bajirao's younger brother, Chimaji Appa, on 17th December 1740. Born in 1708, this remarkable young man had proved a veritable prodigy, as well on the battle-field as in finance and statecraft. A brief review of his great contributions to the strength of the Marathas is the best means of indicating the seriousness of the loss brought about by his untimely death. It may be noted in advance that he was the father of the lad who led the Marathas to the Panipat disaster, in 1761. More about Chimaji's equally precocious son, ill-starred Sadashivrao Bhau, later.

Chimaji participated in Bajirao's Gujarat and Malwa campaigns, where he distinguished himself. But his more important role was in the South. At the Court of Shahu, his principal function was to safeguard his brother Bajirao's interests against the assaults of his domestic rivals, during his prolonged absence from home. He was equally useful in the management of finance and other vital supplies to the far-flung armies of the Marathas. Socially, he was instrumental in protecting Bajirao, even against himself, from the blunders he was about to commit in his infatuation for his Muslim mistress, Mastani. His other achievements were his honourable settlement with the Siddis of Janjira (1736), and the capture of Bassein (near Bombay) from the Portuguese in 1739.

The problem of the Siddis has already been stated in an earlier chapter. Shivaji and Sambhaji, in spite of their best efforts, had not been able to oust them from their island fortress. In addition to their geographical advantages, the Siddis were considerably strengthened by their alliance with the Portuguese and the English. For a short while, however, this sinister combination against the Marathas on the west coast—was neutralised by the rise of a "Shivaji of the Seas"—the Maratha Koli captain Kanhoji Angre. The astute diplomacy of Balaji Vishvanath, the first Peshva,

and the benign influence of Shahu had succeeded in enlisting the powerful Angre on the side of the senior Chhatrapati, in 1714. But the death of Kanhoji, in July 1729, proved unfortunate for the Marathas. The dissensions among his successors, Shekhoji and Sambhaji, paralysed the strength of the Angres as well as the Peshva. Bajirao's first efforts to subdue the Siddis were frustrated by the failure of the Angres to lend timely and effective support from the sea. But dogged perseverance in that important task, the valiant fight put up by Pilaji Jadhav under very trying conditions, and the clever diplomacy and skilled manoeuvres of Chimaji Appa at the most critical time, saved the situation. The settlement with the Siddis, of 25th September 1736, was both honourable and advantageous to the Marathas. Consequently, the Siddis' "power on the sea declined, and the Siddi became in all but name a tributary of the Maratha State." (Dighe).

The capture of Bassein from the Portuguese, on 12th May 1739, by Chimaji Appa, is one of the shining episodes of Maratha history. The Portuguese were long settled on the west coast. Since their acquisition of Goa in 1510, they had steadily grown in power, until they were eclipsed by their European rivals. As stated before, in spite of mutually conflicting interests, the English, the Portuguese and the Siddis, invariably acted in concert whenever the Marathas tried to oust them. To safeguard their position in Northern Konkan, the Viceroy at Goa had appointed a 'General of the North' with his headquarters at Bassein. They provoked Maratha hostility by interference in their struggle with the Siddis, as well as by their persecution of the Hindus. Shivaji's success against the English at Khanderi-Underi, and the terror struck into the foreigners by the mighty Kanhoji Angre, were pointers to the potentialities of the Marathas in the matter of naval defence. Alive to these dangers and antecedents, the Peshvas decided to make a final effort to expel the Portuguese at least from Northern Konkan. The victory of Chimaji Appa, in his siege of Bassein in May 1739, was the climax and culmination of this policy. For details of that campaign the reader must look elsewhere. It was a grim struggle on both sides. Geography, national tradition and scientific equipment such as artillery, were all on the side of the Europeans. Yet sheer determination, resourcefulness, marvellous heroism and toughness of fibre, decided the issue in favour of the Marathas. During the last crucial moments of the assault, Chimaji was urgently called to the North by Bajirao to meet the menace of the Persian invasion. But like Nelson, he "turned the blind eye" to the order, for the time being.

He clinched his triumph by floating the *Bhagwa Jhenda* from the battlements of Bassein, on 23rd May 1739. The magnanimity of the conqueror was seen in the terms of the Portuguese capitulation, just as his humility was reflected in his report of it to "Shrimant Maharaj Shri Paramahamsa Baba" (Brahmendra Svami). The vanquished were assured a safe retreat, their churches in Bassein were guaranteed protection, and such of the Christians as chose to remain were granted immunity from interference in their religious practices. The English, much impressed with this victory, sent a mission to Satara, under Captain Gordon, as a result of which they secured the privilege of free trade within the dominions of the Chhatrapati (June 1739).

On account of this friendship, the English rendered valuable assistance to the next Peshva in the overthrow of the Angres. When Sambhaji Angre died, in 1739, he was succeeded by his illegitimate half-brother Tulaji who was challenged by Manaji (another natural son of Kanhoji). Balaji Bajirao took full advantage of their fratricidal conflict and supported Manaji. In the fight that ensued, their strongholds of Gheria (Vijayadurg) and Suvarnadurg were captured, with the help of the English, and Tulaji was taken prisoner (1756). Thus one more thorn in the side of the Peshva, was removed by the defeat of Tulaji. The Angres, since the death of Kanhoji, had played a very discreditable part in the defence of the Konkan. They were divided among themselves, shifty, sullen and undependable—inactive in petulance or treacherous out of spite.

Raghuji Bhonsle was yet another source of trouble for the Peshvas. He was a near relation of Shahu's and therefore appeared to safeguard the interests of the Chhatrapati from the encroachments of the Peshva. As a matter of fact, he wanted to secure the throne of Satara for his son, if possible, through adoption. For that purpose he tried to install a friendly Peshva near Shahu, when Bajirao died in 1740. But foiled in his schemes, he was much embroiled with Balaji Bajirao, whose appointment as Peshva was embarrassing to him. Nevertheless he was a great warrior and had already carved out a province for himself in Berar. Between 1739 and 1741, at Shahu's instance, he led an expedition into the Carnatic which brought him additional prestige. When Alivardi Khan usurped power in Bengal, in 1740, Raghuji saw in the consequent unsettlement caused in the eastern provinces his opportunity to push forward in that direction. At first through his deputy Bhaskarpant, and then personally, he succeeded in harrying those lands (1742-51) to such an extent that Alivardi Khan was obliged to come to terms with Raghuji. The English at Calcutta

built the "Maratha ditch" at this time to protect their settlement from Maratha incursions. Orissa was ceded to Raghuji, and an additional tribute of 12 *lakhs* of rupees was paid annually to him as *chauth*. The river Suvarna-*rekha* was agreed to as the boundary between the Khan's and Raghuji's territories. Alivardi died in 1756.

Alongside of the above happenings we have to note, too, the activities of Raghuji in another direction. His expeditions were carried on in the West and North, up to the borders of Malwa and Bundelkhand. Here he came into conflict with the Peshvas and their generals. Even in the time of Bajirao he had evaded co-operation and thereby incurred his wrath. Now when the new Peshva, like his great father, personally led campaigns in the North—in Malwa and Bundelkhand (1741-42)—Raghuji appeared still hostile. He even instigated the Gaikwad and Dabhade to attack the Peshva from the west, while simultaneously he would himself attack him from the east. But Balaji Bajirao proved more than a match for his adversary. Securing his hold on the two Central Indian provinces, he turned to Bihar and Bengal to counteract Raghuji's plans. Alivardi Khan welcomed the Peshva's intervention, and the Mughal Emperor yielding to the importunities of the Nawab of Bengal, agreed to finally cede Malwa and Bundelkhand to the Peshva if he should rid his eastern provinces of the depredations of Raghuji's armies. The Peshva, having inflicted a couple of defeats on Raghuji in the course of 1742, returned in triumph to his capital in June 1743. Owing to the good offices of Shahu, once again, Raghuji and the Peshva were reconciled. The boundaries of their North Indian possessions were carefully demarcated by the Chhatrapati. In July 1743, the Peshva received confirmation of the grants made to him by the Mughal Emperor. This increased his commitments and responsibilities in Hindusthan. For the Peshva bound himself thereby to maintain order up to the river Chambal, and to defend the Emperor against his internal and external enemies. Ranoji Shinde, Malharrao Holkar, and Yashvantrao Pawar were left in Central India as the Peshva's 'Wardens of the Marches'. From these developments to Panipat was not a far cry.

The Nizam alone appeared to stand between the Marathas and their Imperial destiny. Since the death of Bajirao, Nizam-ul-Mulk had to deal with the revolt of his son Nasir Jung whom he had left in charge of the Deccan during his last visit to Delhi. In this delicate task he even invoked the assistance of Balaji Bajirao, either because he had been chastened by his repeated defeats at the hands of the

Marathas, or because he wanted to take no risks in his encounter with his own son. In return for this the Nizam paid the Peshva 15 *lakhs* of rupees in ready cash, besides promising to use his good offices with the Emperor in securing the *subahdari* of Malwa together with the payment of the 50 *lakhs* promised to Bajirao at Durai Sarai. While the Peshva was thus diverted once again to the North, the wily Nizam-ul-Mulk turned to the South in order to retrieve his position in the Carnatic, which was technically his but had fallen to the Marathas under Raghuji Bhonsle, during his prolonged absence from the Deccan.

Reference has been already made to the Carnatic expedition of Raghuji Bhonsle at the instance of Shahu (1739-41). There were several petty nawabs in that region, between the Krishna and Kaveri rivers, Savnoor, Kadappa, Karnool, Trichinopoli and Arcot, who were nominally the vassals of the Nizam. In their neighbourhood were also Maratha rulers like the Rajas of Tanjore and Gooti. It was on account of the conflicts between these Carnatic rulers, and the consequent danger to the southern Marathas, that Shahu's help had been invoked, particularly against Chanda Saheb at Trichinopoli. Raghuji Bhonsle did his work only too thoroughly: swept the Carnatic clean of such booty as he could lay his hands on, making no distinction between Hindu and Muslim, and took Chanda Saheb captive to Satara. In the wake of this Maratha invasion, the Nizam moved into the Carnatic with a vast force, seeing that both the Peshva and Raghuji were thoroughly pre-occupied in North India. His main objective was the recovery of Trichinopoli from the Marathas. This he did, after a long siege, on 29th August 1743. Appointing Muzaffar Jang nawab of the *subah*, he made some minor settlements in the Carnatic and returned to the Deccan in October 1743.

Shahu, however, would not reconcile himself to this setback to the Maratha interests in the Carnatic. His inclinations were seconded by the ambition of Babuji Naik who had accompanied Raghuji during the previous campaign in the Carnatic, and who was also the candidate for the Peshvaship sponsored by Raghuji. But he proved a ridiculous failure. Hence Sadashivrao Bhau, son of Chimaji Appa, was dispatched to take his place, on 5th December 1746. This had the desired effect. In the course of a year of campaigning, at the head of an army of 60,000 Marathas, this young man defeated the Nawab of Savnoor and Nasir Jung (son of Nizam-ul-Mulk) and completely re-established the lost prestige of the Marathas in the region between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers.

At this time the Marathas in the North were involved in a war of succession in Rajputana. Jai Singh of Amber (Jaipur), a great friend of Bajirao's, had died in 1743. His two sons, Ishvar Singh and Madhav Singh, after a brief respite, came to a clash in 1746. At the instigation of Jagat Singh, the Rana of Mewar, Madhav Singh aiming at the *gadi*, attacked his elder brother Ishvar Singh. The Ranas of Mewar, Bundi, and Kotah supported him in this unjust war. Ishvar Singh therefore sought the help of Shinde and Holkar, in the name of his late father who was their great friend. The Marathas were not unwilling. They not only assisted Ishvar Singh, but severely punished the Ranas. This left a festering wound in that section of the Rajputs, which was aggravated by the events that soon followed.

The Maratha generals who went to the rescue of Ishvar Singh had done so for a consideration. The *Raja* had promised to pay them three *lakhs* of rupees for the service. The unequal division of this remuneration led to an unseemly quarrel between Shinde and Holkar, which created a very embarrassing situation for the Peshva. Holkar thought of reimbursing himself by helping Madhav Singh who was prepared to pay him 65 *lakhs*! War between Shinde and Holkar was averted only by the timely intervention of the Peshva who personally went to Rajputana, in December 1747, to resolve this intricate tangle. Before he returned to Poona, on 9th July 1748, he had brought about a settlement between the two sons of Jai Singh on the one side, and the two Maratha generals on the other. Yet, no sooner was his back turned, than hostilities were renewed in Jaipur; for Ishvar Singh would not fulfil the terms of the recent settlement. Holkar now intervened with greater justification on behalf of the injured Madhav Singh. He was so successful that, as a consequence, Ishvar Singh sought refuge in suicide, in 1751. Madhav Singh, who finally got himself installed at Jaipur, rewarded Holkar with his *jagir* in Rampura (in Mewar territory) with which he had been compensated while his brother ruled. The entire episode left the Marathas in bad odour with the Rajputs. Nemesis followed in the wake of Panipat, ten years later.

In the meanwhile, events were fast moving towards chaos. Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah died in June 1748, worn out by his Carnatic expedition, undertaken at the age of seventy-nine. Chhatrapati Shahu followed him eighteen months later, in December 1749. We described the situation in Maharashtra at the time of Shahu's death, in an earlier section. The succession of Ram Raja and the discomfiture of Tarabai, no doubt, left the Peshva apparently unrivalled

at home; but the entire burden of the State was now placed on his shoulders. The consequences of this on the fortunes of the Marathas were far-reaching. The full story of the problems created in the Deccan and Carnatic by the death of Asaf Jah is not strictly relevant to our present context. It is narrated, in connection with the Anglo-French struggle, in another part of this book. To a large extent it proved immediately advantageous to the Marathas. Ghazi-ud-din Khan, the eldest son of the late Nizam who was at Delhi, acting as his father's deputy at the Imperial Court, was friendly to the Marathas. His younger brother, Nasir Jang, had succeeded to the *gadi* at Hyderabad, but he was not destined to live long. On 16th December 1750, he was shot dead by the Pathan chief of Karnool, a partisan of his nephew and rival Muzaffar Jang, during his visit to the Carnatic. His successor, Muzaffar Jang, too, met with an identical end, on 13th February 1751. The viceroyalty of the Deccan was then secured by Salabat Jang, the third son of Asaf Jah. But the Peshva opposed this succession, as he wished to place Ghazi-ud-din Khan, his friend and ally, on that important *gadi*. He could certainly do this with justification, as his protege was the eldest son of Asaf Jah. But before this could be realised, Ghazi-ud-din was poisoned by his step-mother, on 16th October 1752, within seventeen days of his arrival at Aurangabad.

Though the Peshva thus failed to place Ghazi-ud-din in Hyderabad, he nonetheless made important gains by his intervention. An armed clash with Salabat Jang, despite the support of the French under Bussy, resulted in the Peshva being bought off by the cession of Khandesh, Baglana, and other lands worth two *lakhs* of rupees annually in Sangamner and Jalna sub-divisions, besides tribute from the Carnatic and Hyderabad. In return for all this the Peshva helped Salabat Jang in the reduction of the rebellious nawabs of Bankapur and Savnoor in Western Karnataka and pledged himself to defend the Nizam against all his enemies. But the conditions in the Nizam's dominions were so bad, that the Marathas could not for long resist the temptation to exploit them. Throughout his regime, Salabat Jang was a mere puppet in the hands of his successive regents (Shah Nawaz Khan, Bussy, and Nizam Ali) who ruled the State, while the intrigues of his courtiers, and the mutinies of his unpaid soldiery paralysed the administration. (C.H.I., IV, p.388). Shah Nawaz Khan was murdered, Bussy was recalled by Lally, and Nizam Ali became the dictator, in June 1759.

In November 1757, the Peshva's son Vishvasrao had invaded the country east of Aurangabad. In January 1758,

Nizam Ali attacked the Peshva near Sindkhed but was compelled to accept terms under which the Marathas gained $2\frac{1}{2}$ million rupees' worth of land and the fort of Naldurg. The recall of Bussy by Lally occasioned by the increasing pressure of the English in the Carnatic, considerably weakened the Nizam. His able artillery officer, Ibrahim Khan Gardi, was won over by the Peshva. In November 1759, Sadashivrao Bhau occupied the important stronghold of Ahmadnagar by a stratagem, as a preliminary to his invasion of the Nizam's territory in force. In the January following, a vast Maratha army led by the Bhau, Raghunathrao and Ibrahim Khan Gardi, fell upon Nizam Ali and Salabat Jang, at Udgir. Being overpowered, the Nizam's army retreated to Aulse, and met with total disaster. All the commanders and most of the men were killed, and the Nizam was once again obliged to make peace. Territory yielding six millions of rupees annually was ceded in the province of Aurangabad with half of Bijapur and Bidar, including the fortresses of Burhanpur, Asirgarh, and Daulatabad. Only Hyderabad and some parts of Bijapur and Bidar alone remained in the hands of the sons of Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk I. "This was the apogee of Maratha success. Nemesis came at Panipat within one year. . ." (C.H.I.)

In the light of the achievements so far described, it should not be difficult to understand how the Marathas came to be the paramount power in India towards the middle of the eighteenth century. The English who were to be their successors were yet to emerge into prominence. The significance of their victories at Arcot (1751) and Wandewash (1760) in the South, and at Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) in the North, was not, and could not be, fully grasped by contemporary Indians. No prophet could foresee that the Marathas, like the French, would be eclipsed by the English before very long. Hence the Peshvas and their generals, elated by their continued successes in all parts of the country, naturally regarded themselves as the political heirs of the Imperial Mughals. Before they could fully realise the implications of that burden and responsibility they found themselves engaged in the Punjab for a crucial test.

In an earlier chapter we noted the circumstances in which the Durrani chief Ahmad Shah Abdali entered India, in the wake of Nadir Shah's assassination in 1747. More surely than Babur claimed to be the successor of Timur, Ahmad Shah justified his Indian invasion as the heir to Nadir Shah. Whatever the pretext, the trail blazed by the Turki, Mughal and Irani adventurers, leading into the rich Plains of Hindusthan, was too tempting to be forsaken.

Consequently Ahmad Shah led a series of expeditions into the Punjab commencing in 1748. He met with a reverse on his first raid, but with the pertinacity of Babur he discovered the road to a stunning victory, though with very different results. The Emperor Muhammad Shah died in the year of his first incursion. Ahmad Shah, the next Mughal Emperor, provoked the Durrani, but failed ultimately to withstand him. In 1751, the Emperor, on the advice of Safdar Jang (Nawab Vazir of Oudh), invited the assistance of the Marathas, for the suppression of the Bangash Afghans (Rohillas) who had revolted in the Doab. The Marathas performed their task with a ruthlessness that earned for them the perennial hatred of the Rohillas. Yet, for the time being, they felt encouraged by the grant of half of Rohilkhand, as reward for their services, which they proudly held until the Panipat disaster (1761).

Ahmad Shah Abdali irrupted once again, at the close of 1751, but was bought off by the nerveless Emperor in panic, with the cession of the Punjab and Multan. Perhaps he had good reason, for the civil war which soon overtook Delhi revealed the inherent weakness of his position. This strife arose from the rivalry between (the Irani and Shia) Safdar Jang and (the Turani and Sunni) Ghazi-ud-din II. The latter was the able but violent and thoroughly unscrupulous son of Ghazi-ud-din who was murdered at Aurangabad for attempting to secure his inheritance as the eldest son of the Nizam. He forced himself on the Emperor and deprived Safdar Jang of most of the high offices he had held. He next used the Marathas under Malharrao Holkar to depose, blind, and destroy the hapless Emperor Ahmad Shah himself, on 2nd June 1754. A son of Jahandar Shah was raised to the throne as Alamgir II. This reckless adventurer then meddled in the Punjab, which though ceded to the Abdali was seething with trouble. His intervention provoked Ahmad Shah to another incursion. He entered Delhi on 28th January 1757, and before returning to Afghanistan a month later, married a widow of the late Emperor Muhammad Shah, took a Mughal bride for his son Timur Shah, and plundered the holy city of Mathura. Ghazi-ud-din, nevertheless ingratiated himself with the invader, and continued to dominate the Emperor. He finally found cause to remove Alamgir II, as he had his predecessor, and put a new puppet on the throne with the title of Shah Jahan II, in 1759. The son of the deposed Emperor, Ali Gauhar, having proved hostile to Ghazi-ud-din, sought refuge in exile.

The Marathas were no merely idle witnesses of all these kaleidoscopic happenings. Malharrao Holkar and Raghu-

nathrao, the Peshva's brother who had lately made his mark in his campaigns in Rajputana and the Punjab, were the active allies of Ghazi-ud-din. A letter from the Peshva, dated 21st March 1759, directed his generals in the North to support anyone who should pay them 50 lakhs of rupees and promise other territorial gains. Raghunathrao had already occupied Lahore (in April 1758) and driven away Timur Shah Abdali. To punish this impertinence, Ahmad Shah again crossed the Indian border, in August 1759, pushing back the Marathas towards Delhi. There he was infuriated at the news of the murder of Alamgir II. On 9th January 1760, he slew Dattaji Shinde in an encounter at Barari Ghat (10 miles north of Delhi). On 4th March Malharrao Holkar was routed at Sikandarabad by the Afghan general Jahan Khan. The news of these disconcerting reverses reached the Peshva in the Deccan while the Marathas were still rejoicing over their triumph at Udgir. Consequently it was decided to send effective reinforcements post-haste to the North in order to save Delhi from the Afghan menace and recover their lost hold on the Punjab. Sadashivrao Bhau, with the lustre of his recent victories in the Carnatic and Deccan, was elected to lead the expedition, in supersession of the superior claims of his cousin Raghunathrao who was senior to him. This culminated in the fateful battle of Panipat which dealt a severer blow to the prestige of the Marathas than they had ever suffered before.

The Peshva's orders to Sadashivrao were: "You must destroy the enemy finally and hold all the territory up to the Indus." We cannot follow his itinerary in the execution of this mandate, but must rapidly sketch the events leading up to the tragic end. Though in the beginning things appeared to go well with the Marathas, a series of blunders on the part of Bhau, and the cool and consummate tactics of the Durrani, equally contributed to a finale undreamt of by the Peshva. Bhau reached Delhi on 23rd September 1760; the end came on Wednesday, 14th January 1761. As in the first Battle of Panipat (1526), when Babur won his decisive victory over Ibrahim Lodi, so this time too action started in the early morning and fighting went on till about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. There is no unanimity in the estimates of the combatants and the casualties. Nevertheless it will be correct enough to assume with Sir Jadunath Sarkar that the Afghans had a numerical superiority of about 15,000 combatants over the Marathas (60,000 against 45,000). But if we include the camp-followers, the commissariat as well as the women who accompanied the fighters, the Marathas far outnumbered their enemies. Hence in the

slaughter that ensued, on the battlefield as well as outside, the total casualties of the Marathas were staggering. About 28,000 died in action, 22,000 were taken captive, and 50,000 more were slaughtered during their flight! 50,000 horses were captured "either by the Afghan army or the villagers along the route of flight. . . 'they came like droves of sheep in thousands.'" According to Professor Shejwalkar: "The loss on the Afghan side can be estimated at some 20,000, practically all dying on the battle-field. Three-fourths of this number were possibly the Indian Ruhelas, the rest being Afghans and other foreign allies."

Out of this holocaust, about 50,000 Marathas succeeded in extricating themselves. But, alas! among them were not Sadashivrao Bhau, Vishvasrao (the Peshva's son), Ibrahim Khan Gardi (the artillery expert trained under Bussy and won over from the Nizam's service by the Peshva), and Samsher Bahadur (a son of Bajirao by his charmer Mastani). Malharrao Holkar, Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnavis were among the notables who escaped alive. They were destined to play a very important part in the momentous happenings during the rest of the century. But there is little exaggeration in the remark of Sir Jadunath Sarkar that "an entire generation of leaders (of the Marathas) was cut off (at Panipat) at one stroke." Balaji Bajirao, the Peshva, himself died of the shock, on 23rd June, 1761, at Parvati in Poona.

Hot controversies have raged round the allocations of blame for this disaster. Pre-eminently the responsibility rested on Bhau and the Peshva, though others might be implicated secondarily. Malharrao Holkar is charged by some scholars with betrayal at a crucial moment. Others would blame Ibrahim Khan Gardi for his dogged faith in his artillery which pinned down Bhau to a suicidal blunder in tactics. Veterans like Suraj Mal Jat and Malharrao Holkar had warned Sadashivrao against the dangers of entrenched warfare to which the Marathas were unaccustomed. The Jat general had even offered to provide in Bharatpur an advantageous base of operations for the traditional guerilla tactics of the Marathas in which they were pastmasters. But Bhau was obdurate and overbearing. He alienated his advisers by his arrogance, even as he had antagonised the people of the surrounding regions by his ruthless exactions. To meet the cost of his vast unmanageable army, he had gone the length of tearing out the silver ceiling of the Diwan-i-Khas at Delhi, with which he coined money to pay his troops! Even so he had to make desperate demands for money from home, which never came. Lastly, overconfident of himself and his strategy, he occupied a

position far away from his base of supplies, and allowed Abdali to get in between himself and Delhi. This proved the ruin of the Marathas. They went into battle without rations and then confessed to the enemy (counting upon his chivalry?) that the cup of their miseries was full to the brim and there was no room for a drop more!

Abdali had arrayed his forces well. They were better disciplined and more compact. When there was nervousness among some of his officers over the initial successes of the Marathas, Abdali was unperturbed. "Military operations must not be precipitated," he declared, "you shall see how I manage this affair and bring it to a successful conclusion." Kashi Raj, the Maratha observer in Shuja-ud-daulah's camp, remarks: "Ahmad Shah's orders were obeyed like destiny, no man daring to hesitate or delay one moment in executing them." Moreover, he had won the Muslims of North India to his side, making the war appear a *Jihad* against the infidels. Najib Khan, the Rohilla, was an implacable enemy of the Marathas, and he had joined—nay, invited—the invader. Shuja-ud-daulah (successor of Safdar Jang who had died) was vacillating, but was persuaded to join the Afghans despite his inherited predilections against Najib Khan. Nevertheless he did not actively participate in the battle but assisted the Marathas during their rout. Suraj Mal Jat, too, had kept away (because of tactical differences with Bhau), and yet he gave shelter to most of the beaten Marathas who needed food and nursing. Even the victor Abdali wrote a letter of sympathy to the Peshva over the catastrophe that had overtaken his men.

While all are agreed on the enormity of the military disaster, the political inferences drawn therefrom by scholars have differed very widely. Vincent Smith described this as "a conflict far more determined than either of the battles fought on the same ground in the sixteenth century." The results of Panipat (1761), in the estimation of Sir Alfred Lyall, "were quite disproportionate to the magnitude of the exploit." It may well so appear, as the invader retired into Afghanistan after this futile holocaust, nominating Ali Gauhar, who was in exile, as Emperor Shah Alam II with Ghazi-ud-din as his *Vazir*. Sadashivrao Bhau had, before his fall, raised Mirza Jawan Bakht (son of Ali Gauhar) to the throne in place of Ghazi-ud-din's last puppet Shah Jahan II. Ali Gauhar (Shah Alam II) crowned himself, in his exile at Allahabad, and chose Shuja-ud-daulah as his *Vazir* (instead of the hated Ghazi-ud-din). He could not, however, return to his capital until 1772, and then only as a protegee of the Marathas. As Sarkar has observed: "From 10th October 1760, when Sadashivrao Bhau deposed

the Vazir's puppet Shah Jahan II and proclaimed Shah Alam II (Jawan Bakht?—E.&D., VIII, p.278) Emperor in Delhi, to the 6th January 1772, when Shah Alam rode into the capital of his fathers for the first time as sovereign, the Imperial city was widowed of her lord." During this interval, until his death, on 31st October 1770, Najib Khan was dictator at Delhi and "supreme regulator of the affairs of what still remained of the Mughal Empire."

It is clear from the above that, although an Emperor still existed "somewhere in the Mughal Empire", he could not enter his own capital for over eleven years. When he was reinstated at Delhi in January 1772, it was by the power of the Marathas. Yet the *Shorter Cambridge History of India* categorically asserts: "all hopes of a Maratha Empire were destroyed at Panipat". (p.478). Smith quotes with approval Elphinstone's remark that "the confederacy of the Maratha princes dissolved on the cessation of their common danger". (O.H.I., p.465, 2nd ed.). Sarkar seems to fall into line with these opinions when he writes: "Since the days of Vishwanath K. Rajwade, it has been the fashion with Maratha writers to belittle the result of the battle of Panipat as no disaster to the Marathas except for the death of so many chiefs and so many thousands of soldiers ... But a dispassionate survey of Indian history will show how unfounded this chauvinistic claim is." But he gives away his case when, in the very next sentence, he admits that the Marathas restored Shah Alam II to Delhi in 1772, and that the "proud position" of being "king-maker" and "dominator of the Mughal's empire and the real master of his nominal ministers and generals", was secured by Mahadji Shinde in 1789. (*Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, pp.354-5). The fact is that the Marathas showed considerable resilience in the face of Panipat, and rapidly recovered from its shock, under the very next Peshva Madhavrao I (1761-1772). Until their power was broken by the superior might of the English, as the century closed, the Marathas continued to be pre-eminent in India.

5. The Recovery under Madhavrao I

"There are at present three great enemies to the State," wrote the precocious Peshva Madhavrao I, in July 1762, "Haidar Ali, Nizam Ali, and the English; but by God's grace, they will all be subdued." It was then hardly a year since he had been made Peshva at the age of seventeen. Naturally, his uncle Raghunathrao was appointed Regent until Madhavrao should come of age. Before his premature death, on 18th November 1772, as Strachey remarked, "the Marathas now seemed to have become as formidable as

before the disaster of Panipat." If they failed to make the best use of that revived opportunity to found a lasting Maratha dominion in India, it was *not* due to the effects of Panipat, but to more inherent causes that manifested themselves independently of that great debacle. Contemporary English observers understood the secrets of the Marathas better than the "dispassionate" critics of Maratha "chauvinism" today. They noted, on 30th April 1770: "It has always been allowed, and that too with just reason, that nothing can reduce the Maratha power but dissension among themselves, and it is fortunate for the other Powers of Hindusthan that the Maratha Chiefs are always ready to take every advantage of each other." This fatal weakness was not imparted to them by Panipat. Phoenix-like, they rose to pre-eminence once again out of the ashes of Panipat, during the all too short regime of Madhavrao I (1761-72).

These eleven years were full of warlike and diplomatic activities. Far from being disheartened by the losses suffered by them at Panipat, they seemed determined to wipe out its sad memories by fresh achievements. In this they succeeded to a very remarkable extent. Of the three great enemies envisaged by the young Peshva, the Nizam, Haidar Ali and the English, the first two were more than humbled; the conflict with the English was not yet open, and it remained to be settled after the death of Madhavrao. The first Anglo-Maratha War began only three years later (1775-82). Though some of the happenings were synchronous, it will be convenient to consider the history of this period in four parts: (i) Maratha relations with the Nizam; (ii) Maratha conflict with Haidar Ali; (iii) Diplomatic relations with the English; and (iv) Maratha recovery in the North. Other aspects, like the intrigues and recalcitrance of Raghunathrao and the administrative improvements effected by Madhavrao, may be reserved for later treatment.

The Nizam was the first to take advantage of the Maratha disaster at Panipat. He found in that calamity of his enemies the best opportunity to wipe out his own shame and losses at Udgir. Salabat Jang was now totally eclipsed by his brother Nizam Ali, who at once set about mobilising all the forces that were likely to be of use to him against the Peshva. These included Maratha chiefs like Murarrao Ghorpade, Hanumantrao Nimbalkar, Ramchandra Jadhav and Janoji Bhonsle; the nawabs of Karnool, Kadappa and Savnoor; and the English as possible allies. He started military action with a devastating campaign, and marched towards Poona with an army of 60,000. Unfortunately, he concentrated too early on the destruction of Hindu temples

en route, and thereby alienated his Maratha allies. The result was a decisive victory for his enemies, in January 1762. The treaty that the Nizam was forced to sign might have been more favourable to the Marathas but for the unpatriotic impulses of Raghunathrao, the regent. "It is enough to say," writes A. C. Banerjee, "that Raghunath wanted to secure a potential ally in his struggle for power at Poona, and tried to conciliate Nizam Ali by undeserved leniency."

Apart from the above betrayal of his interests, Madhavrao had cause for great dissatisfaction with his uncle. Matters soon came to a head between them, as between Akbar and Bairam Khan (though the latter was more loyal to his royal master than Raghunathrao to the young Peshva). By September 1762 the regent had thrown himself into the arms of the Nizam by running away to Aurangabad. Civil war thus became inevitable. On 12th November, the young Peshva, suffering from fever, and betrayed by some of his officers such as Sakharam Bapu, was compelled to submit to his designing uncle. Seeing that Nizam Ali and Janoji Bhonsle were marching to reinforce Raghunathrao's forces, Madhavrao surrendered, and averted a great disaster to the Maratha State. For the time being Raghunathrao was won over by tact, but the Nizam and Janoji Bhonsle could not be forgiven for the part they had played in this domestic crisis.

Internal divisions within the Maratha camp soon provided another opportunity to the Nizam to play his old game. Those that had sided with the Peshva in the late struggle included the chief of Miraj. When Raghunathrao besieged Miraj with a view to punishing him, he did not hesitate to appeal to the Nizam for help. Starting on his second campaign against Poona, Nizam Ali made preposterous demands from the Peshva to find a *casus belli*, in February 1763. Madhavrao who was away in the Carnatic hurried back and joined his uncle. Nizam Ali's designs against Poona were foiled by a counter-attack on Hyderabad, and he was compelled by this manoeuvre to retreat for the safety of his capital. The opposing forces met at Rakshasbhuvan on the Godavari, on 10th August. Madhavrao played a very active part in the decisive action which followed and elicited encomiums even from his jealous uncle. "He surprised me," wrote Raghunathrao to the Peshva's mother; "he had never before seen a fight. I have confidence in his future management of responsibility." The Nizam's defeat was so severe that he was once again compelled to make a humiliating surrender. Raghunathrao was inclined to be lenient as before, but the Peshva insisted on the sur-

render of territories (worth 60 *lakhs*) ceded at Udgir, in addition to other districts yielding 22 *lakhs* annually. The treaty was signed on 25th September 1763. So abiding was the lesson of this victory that the Nizam never again seriously challenged the might of the Marathas for thirty-two years. When he did so, at Kharda in 1795, the verdict in favour of the Marathas was reconfirmed, though they were not destined to profit by it, as we shall notice later. The biographer of Madhavrao has justly observed: "This treaty (of 25th September 1763) deserves to be regarded as a landmark in the history of the Marathas... As a contemporary news-writer observed, this brilliant success impressed the Deccan as well as Hindusthan. This was indeed the proclamation of Maratha revival after the disaster of Panipat. Finally, ... it closed the period of Raghunathrao's regency and marked the beginning of Madhavrao's independent career. It became clear to all that, in spite of his lack of experience, this young ruler was great alike in war and in diplomacy, and possessed to the fullest degree those qualities of leadership which his uncle totally lacked." Madhavrao's dealings with Haidar Ali and the English testify to the correctness of these remarks.

Haidar Ali's usurpation of the throne of Mysore (August 1761) has been alluded to before. From the rank of an ordinary *Naik* in the army of the Hindu *Raja* of that State, he had made himself the most powerful Sultan, next only to the Nizam, in the South. While the Nawab of Arcot had become a tool in the hands of the English, and the Nizam was oscillating between the French and the English for support, Haidar was dreaded by the English on the one side and the Marathas on the other. Here we are primarily concerned with his contest with the Marathas, which, however, only served to establish the superiority of their power under Madhavrao. Between 1764 and 1772 four expeditions were led against Haidar by the Marathas, in all of which the Sultan was defeated and the balance of power lay with the Peshva.

The conflict with Haidar started out of Baramahal which the usurper had ceded to the Maratha general Visaji Pant, in addition to a cash payment of three *lakhs* of rupees, as the price of his withdrawing Maratha support to Khanderao, Diwan of Mysore. Encouraged by the Maratha defeat at Panipat, Haidar not only refused to part with Baramahal but also assisted Basalat Jang, a brother of Nizam Ali, to besiege the stronghold of Sira in Tumkur district which was then held by the Marathas. Marching from success to success, he soon dominated the Carnatic districts to such an extent that the Marathas lost about 50 *lakhs* of rupees

of revenue in those regions. After the conclusion of peace with Nizam Ali, in January 1762, therefore, Raghunathrao turned to the South in order to punish the Mysore usurper. But his expedition had little success, being hampered by his financial difficulties, the advent of the rainy season, dissensions in the Maratha camp, and the surreptitious help the English gave Haidar Ali. The Marathas were further distracted by the second invasion of Nizam Ali which ended in his defeat at Rakshasbhuvan (August 1763). Meanwhile Haidar consolidated his position and even pushed northwards into the Krishna valley. Madhavrao, now freed from the danger of the Nizam and the handicap of his uncle (whose regency he had just overthrown and who was compelled to retire as a pensioner to Anandavalli near Nasik), decided on a more effective campaign against Haidar. At the end of the struggle which occupied the whole of 1764, the Marathas dealt Haidar such a heavy blow, at Jadi Hanvati in December 1764, that he had to fly from the field, disguised and wounded. But his uncle's perversity once again deprived the Peshva of the full benefits of his military triumph. Suspected of mischievous intrigues at Anadavalli, Raghunathrao was called to the South, only to spoil the culmination of a successful campaign. The terms of the treaty with Haidar, in March 1765, were formulated by Raghunathrao who retained therein a margin of advantage for his selfish designs at the expense of the Peshva. According to Wilks, the historian of Mysore, the treaty was "an adjustment of extreme moderation, considering the desperate circumstances in which Hyder was placed."

The next campaign against Haidar Ali was again the outcome of his aggressions. The local rulers of Raidurg, Bellary, Harpanhalli, Chitaldurg, etc., appealed to the Peshva for protection against the Mysore Sultan's depredations, towards the end of 1766. Madhavrao started for the South once again in January 1767. Haidar had shut himself up in Srirangapatna. The Peshva, pursuing unexpected tactics, struck at Sira and captured it. This was both a vindication of Maratha prestige (as the place had been previously held by them) and a valuable gain in itself. Marching thence to Madgiri, he succeeded in releasing the Hindu *rāja* and his mother who had been imprisoned by Haidar after his usurpation, and took them in his custody. Meanwhile the Nizam, too, was marching against Haidar, desirous of punishing him for the support he had given to his brother Basalat Jang, and hoping to make easy gains with the help of the Marathas. Haidar was thus constrained to come to terms with both his enemies. Besides surrender-

ing important fortresses to the Marathas, he promised to pay the Peshva 31 lakhs of rupees and 18 lakhs to the Nizam, in instalments.

Madhavrao nonetheless found it necessary to repeat his military pressure on the Mysore Sultan before he could collect the gains of the late war. He led his last campaign but one, against Haidar, during the early months of 1770. Though he succeeded this time as before in capturing several important places, his failing health obliged him to retire in April 1770. Haidar was still holding out in Srirangapatna and Bangalore. His strength lay in his better disciplined troops, but as the Portuguese observer, Peixoto, noted: "The Marathas have not only the greatest force on their side, but the prayers of all the people, who everywhere without exception are robbed and harassed (by Haidar), and under a weight of contribution that it is not possible for them to bear." In January 1771, Madhavrao set out for the Carnatic for the last time. But once more he had to return without accomplishing his task, as it was becoming impossible for him to bear the strain. The rest of the campaign was conducted by Trimbakrao Pethe who inflicted a severe defeat on Haidar at Moti Talab, on 5th March 1771. Haidar was ignominiously routed, but the victor as before failed to follow up his triumph. While Haidar immured himself in the fortress of Srirangapatna, the Marathas, after besieging him for some time, frittered away their resources and opportunity in futile marauding in the surrounding country. Meanwhile, the news of the Peshva's fast-approaching end reached the ears of the besieged Sultan. At this critical moment Madhavrao called off the campaign, as Poona had no money to sustain it! Peace was therefore concluded, in April 1772, by which Haidar paid 25 lakhs in cash and 6 lakhs in jewellery, agreeing further to pay 19 lakhs more in three annual instalments. The Marathas retained, besides, the forts of Sira, Madgiri, Gurrunkonda, Dod-ballapur, Kolar and Hoskote with their dependent territories. But with all these gains, it is to be admitted that the Marathas failed to clinch their victories over Haidar Ali, as previously against Nizam Ali, by neutralising him permanently.

In this triangular struggle between the Marathas, the Nizam, and Haidar Ali, the English played a subtle and elusive game. Reserving closer examination of their activities for a later chapter, we shall cite here only a few examples of their deliberate policy. "The Court of Directors were desirous of seeing the Marathas checked in their progress, and would have beheld combinations of other native powers against them with abundant satisfaction." But they

were unwilling to be drawn into active hostilities, "especially as principals, in any case short of absolute defence". They tried to befriend Nizam Ali as a bulwark against the Marathas, but he proved too unreliable. Haidar was the next possible instrument of their policy. Clive explicitly stated: "The chief strength of the Marathas is horse, the the chief strength of Haidar infantry, cannon and small arms. From the one we have nothing to apprehend but ravages, plundering and loss of revenues for a while, from the other ~~extirpation~~." Nevertheless, "to crush the only power in the South who had been able to oppose any respectable resistance to the aggressions of the Maratha States, and who formed, if his friendship could be secured, a barrier between them and the Company's dominions, was in direct opposition to the views of that profound statesman." (Wilks). The attitude of the English authorities in Madras was, consequently, thus expressed in a communication (dated 13th February 1770) to Calcutta: "Were we to assist Haidar, we could not hope to reduce the power of the Marathas, and we should thereby inevitably expose the Carnatic to their ravages, and on the other hand were we to afford them assistance, they might probably be enabled to reduce Haidar entirely, which could only tend to aggrandise their power and render them more dangerous than they are at present, or in case Haidar should accommodate matters with them...he would not fail taking the first opportunity of avenging himself upon the Carnatic and the Company. *We must therefore temporise with both in the best manner we are able.*"

The English at Bombay were no more friendly towards the Marathas, or less apprehensive of their intentions. They considered "the growing power of the Marathas is a subject much to be lamented". Yet they thought it necessary "to cultivate an alliance (with the Marathas) at least for the present", as a combination of Haidar Ali with the Nizam was feared. To prevent, if possible, the Marathas joining these two potentates, Thomas Mostyn was sent to Poona, on 19th November 1767. He stayed there till 27th February 1768. He was instructed: "The possession of Salsette is the first and grand object we have in view." Secondly, "so strong and fine a country as that of Bednure should never be given to the Marathas." Mostyn carried with him valuable gifts for the Peshva as well as Raghoba (Raghunathrao), as the latter was expected to be helpful. The shrewd Peshva, however, stipulated in the course of the negotiations, that "the Hon^{ble} Company would not support or assist any of his enemies *even though they were his relations.*" On the other hand, Madhavrao wanted the

assistance of the English in the capture of Bidnur and Saunda from Haidar. Since so definite an undertaking could not be given by the envoy, Mostyn referred the Peshva to the English authorities in Bombay. The mission proved abortive, but before leaving Poona, Mostyn assured Madhavrao that "so long as he remained firm in his friendship towards them (i.e., the English) they would not think of supporting or assisting either his relations or any one else against him."

Having thus dealt with the three principal enemies of the Marathas in the South, Madhavrao was free to turn his full attention to the North. One of the internal enemies that the Peshva had to constantly face was Janoji Bhonsle, successor to Raghuji of Berar. He had joined Nizam Ali during his attack on Poona, but was bought off by the Peshva, after the battle of Rakshasbhuvan (1763), with a grant of territory worth 32 *lakhs* annually. In spite of this Janoji persisted in his enmity towards the Peshva, and complained to the Emperor Shah Alam that the Peshva had "invaded the patrimonial territories of His Majesty's bounden servant and vassal." In the South he colluded with Raghunathrao, the Nizam and Haidar Ali, against Madhavrao. In October 1765, therefore, Madhavrao led an expedition against him in order to punish him for his treacherous behaviour. He also called upon the Nizam to assist him, according to the terms of his last treaty with him. Janoji being ill prepared for such a contest, started peaceful negotiations. The Peshva let him go after reducing his previous grant to 8 *lakhs*. The remaining 24 *lakhs* worth of lands were shared between the Peshva and the Nizam: 15 *lakhs* were given to the Nizam, while the Peshva retained only 9 *lakhs*.

Further North, the situation was very complicated. The immediate effect of the Maratha disaster at Panipat, and their consequent retreat to the South, was that all the northern powers, big and small, reasserted themselves. The principal among them were the Rajputs, the Jats, and the Bundelas, among the Hindus; and the Rohillas and the Nawab of Oudh among the Muslims. Ahmad Shah Abdali, so long as he was alive, was interested only in getting his tribute regularly without having to lead further military expeditions into Hindusthan. Suraj Mal Jat was the most powerful ruler there, in point of troops as well as treasure. With him was allied the intriguing Ghazi-ud-din since the rise of the Rohilla Najib Khan, the evil genius who had brought about the Panipat disaster. Najib Khan, now styled Najib-ud-daulah, as we noted before, was Dictator at Delhi, until his death on 31st October 1770. His rival

Shuja-ud-daulah of Oudh was ever watchful for an opportunity to overthrow him and bring back to Delhi the fugitive Emperor Shah Alam II whose *Vazir* he was.

The first prominent Maratha general to fight heroically after Panipat for the recovery of Maratha power in the North was Malharrao Holkar. On the one side he had to deal with Madhav Singh of Jaipur, and on the other with Shuja-ud-daulah. In between were the Jats and the Sikhs who gave him endless trouble. Nevertheless he successfully grappled with all of them, until his death on 20th May 1766. But the Punjab was permanently lost to the Marathas after Panipat. Ten years later, when they came back to Delhi, writes H. R. Gupta, "they found the Sikhs too securely established in the Land of the Five Rivers to be ousted by them." Raghunathrao was the next general to attempt the pacification of the North. He had reached Central India a month before the death of Malharrao. Though he began well with exacting tribute from Bhopal, Gohad and the Jat *raja*, he suddenly retreated in the face of a threatened invasion by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Even Shuja-ud-daulah and the English, for once, offered to combine with the Marathas for the expulsion of Abdali, but "he (Raghunath) pleaded rains and went home"! Ahmad Shah was held up by the Sikhs at Lahore; but thanks to the vagaries of Raghunathrao, the opportunity of recovering the Punjab was forever lost.

One of the reasons for Raghunathrao's strange behaviour was the situation created by the death of Malharrao in the Holkar's State. His immediate successor, Malerao, died soon after, early in 1767, without leaving an heir. Raghunathrao wanted to impose on the State his own nominee, with the help of an old minister, Gangadhar Yeshvant Chandrachood, who was his partisan. But his designs were frustrated by the determined resistance of the famous Ahilyabai (mother of Malerao) and Tukojirao Holkar.* Gangadhar was dismissed, and the Peshva approved of Ahilyabai's assumption of the administration, while Tukoji undertook to defend the State with his troops. Until her death in 1795, Ahilyabai carried on the government with great tact and statesmanship, and earned for herself a unique reputation.

After the death of Malharrao Holkar, the situation in the North again seemed to worsen for the Marathas. But the

* Tukojirao Holkar was not related to Malharrao Holkar, but was one of his trusted lieutenants. Ahilyabai was the wife of Malharrao's son Khanderao who had predeceased his father. Malerao was the son of Khanderao and Ahilyabai.

Peshva decided on more vigorous action, and dispatched Mahadji Shinde and Tukoji Holkar to turn the tide in his favour. Unfortunately there was little harmony between the two Maratha generals. In spite of the civil wars that were rampant within Mewar and the Jat kingdom, therefore, they were unable to present a united front to the enemies of the Marathas. In their personal scramble for spoils, they completely forgot the mission on which they had been sent by the Peshva. Two more chiefs, Ramchandra Ganesh Kanade and Visaji Krishna Bhiwale, who were sent with reinforcements, proved no better. They only made confusion worse confounded. Matters came to a crisis when Tukoji and Ramchandra joined Najib-ud-daulah, the inveterate enemy of the Marathas, in order to crush the Jats. Mahadji Shinde was convinced that this unnatural alliance would prove fatal to the Marathas, and he was right. When Najib was baffled by his allies in his policy of grab, he cried out: "Even when I am dead and buried, I'll eat you all up, with only 10,000 men!" Yet, when Najib actually died, on 31st October 1770, and Tukoji and Ramchandra Ganesh got enmeshed in the designs of Najib's son Zabita Khan, Mahadji Shinde and Visaji Krishna espoused the cause of the exiled Emperor Shah Alam and succeeded in reinstating him on the throne of Delhi. Shuja-ud-daulah and the English having failed him in the realisation of his cherished dream of mounting the throne of his ancestors, Shah Alam turned to the Marathas. Encouraged by a secret message from Mahadji Shinde, the anxious Emperor sent a messenger, Saif-ud-din Muhammad Khan, to the Maratha camp on 27th December 1770. On 10th February 1771 Maratha troops forced their way into the Imperial capital. The Emperor started on his historic journey from Allahabad, hitherto his headquarters, in April 1771, but reached his destination only on 6th of January 1772. Shah Alam promised to pay the Marathas 40 lakhs of rupees, besides ceding important districts like Meerut, Kara (Jahanabad) and Kora, and agreeing to abide by their recommendations in the choice of his Imperial staff below the rank of the *Vazir*. Actually, the office of *Mir Bakshi* was conferred upon Zabita Khan, owing to pressure from Tukoji Holkar and Visaji Krishna. Mahadji Shinde was irrevocably opposed to the elevation of Zabita, the son of the eternal enemy of the Marathas, Najib Khan. On 17th December 1772, they obtained the *sanad* from Shah Alam for Kora and Allahabad. Rohilkhand, Sahranpur, and Meerut were restored to Zabita Khan. While these events were taking place at Delhi, the Peshva Madhavrao died at Thevur on 18th November 1772.

• 6. *The Climax under Mahadji Shinde and
Nana Fadnavis*

"The plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha Empire," wrote Grant Duff, "than the early end of this excellent prince (i.e. Madhavrao I)". Madhavrao was only twenty-eight years of age when he died. In the course of the precious eleven years of his all too brief regime, he had certainly achieved the three-fold task he had set himself at the outset: the Nizam and Haidar were humbled, and the English were not allowed to come in the way of Maratha recovery. Nay, the Mughal Emperor who was still the symbol of Imperial supremacy in India, was released from English custody and reinstalled in Delhi by the Marathas. But as misfortune decreed, the brilliant young Peshva was removed by death in the very hour of Maratha triumph. The loss, indeed, was very great. Yet, if it did not prove immediately so fatal as Grant Duff imagined, the result was due to the military genius of Mahadji Shinde and the diplomatic genius of Nana Fadnavis. Much has been written by way of personal criticism of these two great men, and they were not impeccable. Nevertheless it could be claimed without exaggeration that they were the last saviours of the Maratha Empire. After them came the deluge.

The history of India during the next three decades (1772-1802) was epoch-making. On 31st of December 1802 Baji II wrote the epitaph, called the "Treaty of Bassein", on the Empire which Bajirao I had set out to create eighty years before. During the first five decades of this period closing with the death of Madhavrao I, the Marathas—under their three brilliant Peshvas (Bajirao I, Balaji Bajirao, and Madhavrao I)—had well nigh succeeded in expanding their *Svarajya* into *Samrajya*. Despite the terrible warning of Panipat they went ahead, and by 1772 stood on the threshold of Imperial supremacy. Like Robert Clive in 1765, Mahadji Shinde in 1784 preferred to maintain the show of acting as an humble servant of His Imperial Majesty Shah Alam II, instead of usurping his nominal authority. Just as Clive got the *Diwani* for the Company, from the defeated Shah Alam on the earlier occasion, so on the later, Mahadji secured only the title of *Vakil-i-Mutluq*, from the same Emperor, *not for himself but for his principal*, the Peshva. But it is important to note the difference: viz. that, while the English got only the partial and subordinate office of *diwan* (i.e. revenue collector) in one of the provinces of the Empire, the Marathas obtained for the Peshva the higher rank of "Vicegerent of the Empire". For

himself, Mahādji was content with the position of Naib (or Deputy for the Peshva), but in command of the Imperial army at Delhi. As a guarantee for the pay of his troops, he also secured the assignment of the *subahs* of Delhi and Agra in his own name (though he had to pay to the Emperor Rs. 65,000 monthly out of their revenues as a primary charge). With the Emperor in his custody, with his army in Delhi and Agra, and the Peshva recognised as Viceregent of the Empire, formally as well as in reality, Mahadji had made the Marathas *the supreme power in India*. This position was not lost by the Marathas until after the death of Mahadji Shinde in 1794, and of Nana Fadnavis in 1800.

We must now turn to the fateful events in Poona and Maharashtra. Madhavrao I had been succeeded by his younger brother Narayanrao on the Peshva's *gadi*, in 1772; but he was murdered in the presence of his uncle Raghunathrao, on 30th August the very next year. Raghoba (as we shall hereafter call Raghunathrao) immediately became the next Peshva. We need not dwell on the controversy surrounding this nefarious assassination. Considering Raghoba's antecedents, his accession to the *gadi*, the rewards he bestowed on the murderers (including Sumer Singh), and his subsequent conduct and betrayal of Maratha integrity, sufficiently expose his share in the guilt. From the point of view of his nation, his invocation of the assistance of the English against his own people was a worse crime. If the verdict of Rama Shastri went against the individual (Raghoba), the Treaty of Surat (7th March 1775) was fatal to the Marathas as a political power: for the surrender of Raghoba's son, Bajirao II, by the Treaty of Bassein (31st December 1802), was but the culmination of that betrayal. As Mahadji Shinde had restored Shah Alam to Delhi in January 1772, Arthur Wellesley reinstated Baji II in Poona, on 13th May 1803. On 3rd June 1818, the same Bajirao II, after a futile struggle with the English, abjectly surrendered, once more, to Sir John Malcolm. The Peshva became a pensioner of the English, and the Maratha bid for Empire was finally foreclosed. To appreciate the full extent of this miscarriage of the Maratha Imperial venture, we should go a little deeper into the denouement. Before the anticlimax came under Bajirao II, the climax had been reached under the dual leadership of Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnavis.

By an interesting coincidence, both these leaders happened to have escaped alive from the holocaust of Panipat. Mahadji was wounded in the battle and lamed in one leg for life. Nana Fadnavis was just entering his teens and crawled out of Panipat to play his great role in history.

No two men could be more dissimilar in their personal appearance and character than were Mahadji and Nana; yet destiny brought them together, with important consequences to the Marathas. Shinde was a stout warrior and general gifted with all the qualities which make for military success. His dark and thick-set figure with a round face little suggested the virile character that Mahadji displayed throughout his career. He was sociable, even theatrical at times, very shrewd, and astute in his dealings with all kinds of people in various walks of life. Above all he had a keen eye for his own advantage and made the best of opportunities as they arose. Nana Fadnavis was slim and tall, calculating and austere, with a face supported on a crany neck. Diplomacy was his battlefield, and his manoeuvres were political intrigues. He was a very good manager of the affairs of State, particularly adroit at accounts. He could create opportunities for himself if they did not come his way of their own accord, and make them yield the utmost profit to himself. If he had been a little less addicted to power for its own sake, and less jealous of others with at least equal claims to it, he might have rendered more valuable services to the Maratha State than he did actually. Mahadji was more friendly towards the English than was Nana. Perhaps this was because his territorial interests were in the North (Delhi and Central India) beyond the pale of direct British influence or rivalry. On the other hand, Nana was in the very centre of the main currents of British diplomacy and conflicts. Nevertheless the attitude and policy of both were essentially patriotic, *vis-a-vis* the other powers, and whatever their personal differences, they struggled, on the whole, to sustain and consolidate the supremacy of the Marathas in India. Outwardly, at any rate, they acted in unison, as the right and left hands of the Peshva, as Madhavrao II appropriately described Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnavis.

Events in Poona already noticed proved to be the testing time for every Maratha patriot. The details of the Anglo-Maratha struggle will be considered in another place. Here we shall stress mainly its internal aspects down to the last days of Nana Fadnavis, which synchronised with the end of the eighteenth century. Mahadji Shinde died six years earlier. Raghoba did not long enjoy the Peshvaship acquired through the crime of his nephew's murder (30th August 1773). He attempted to divert the attention of his people at home by leading expeditions against the Nizam and Haidar Ali, but unexpected developments in Poona called him back post-haste. On 18th April 1774 a posthumous son was born to Gangabai, widow of the murdered

Narayanrao. This proved a godsend to the *Bar Bhais* (12 comrades) as the opponents of Raghoba were called. Under the leadership of Nana Fadnavis, presently supported by the very able Sakharam Bapu Bokil and Parashuram Bhau Patwardhan, the child was named Sawai Madhavrao (Madhavrao II) and proclaimed Peshva at Purandar on the 40th day of his birth. To meet this challenge from his own countrymen, Raghoba sought refuge with the English on the west coast. Needless to say, they were only too ready to help if thereby they could obtain the "grand objective" of Salsette and Bassein which they had long coveted. This they did secure, not only by the Treaty of Surat (6th March 1775) which Raghoba signed, but also by the terms of the Treaty of Salbai (17th May 1782) which the Maratha opponents of Raghoba, Nana Fadnavis and Mahadji Shinde, were finally obliged to accept at the end of the First Maratha War. Even by the freer Purandar settlement (1st March 1776), which proved tentative and abortive, the English had insisted upon keeping Salsette and Bassein for themselves, whatever else might be changed. Like Frederick II of Prussia's acquisition of Silesia by dint of military occupation, the English stuck to their gains on the west coast, in every successive settlement, thanks to the original sin of Raghoba in inviting their intervention in the domestic affairs of the Marathas. After this they had no qualms in abandoning the cause of their guilty protege, for he was handed over to the tender mercies of his opponents, though under the stipulation of being allowed to settle down at Kopergaum with a pension of Rs. 25,000 per month. From that moment Raghoba disappears from the history of the Peshvas, to quit the world of the living altogether two years later (1784).

For twenty years after Salbai, the English were at peace with the Marathas. The next war between them was caused by Raghoba's son, Bajirao II, following in the footsteps of his notorious father. It was the direct outcome of the Treaty of Bassein (31st December 1802) by which Bajirao entered Wellesley's network of 'subsidiary alliances'. Meanwhile, Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnavis were free to pursue their work of Maratha consolidation with reference to the other Indian powers, viz., Delhi, Hyderabad and Mysore. After the Treaty of Salbai (1782) and until his last visit to Poona, in June 1782, Mahadji, with the help of the French general de Boigne, more than recovered his firm hold on the Mughal Emperor and his own possessions in North India. As H. G. Keene observed: "In the great competitive examination which had been going on for many years, Sindhia had come out first and

taken all the prizes." To mention only the most outstanding of these achievements: the Afghans and the Rajputs were not inclined to allow the Shinde to enjoy with ease his triumph at Delhi. Consequently, at the end of May 1787, Mahadji was faced with a crisis such as he had never met in his entire life. At Lalsot (about 40 miles south of Jaipur) he had to retire before a combination of his enemies which he could not hope successfully to encounter without reinforcements from Poona. In a touching letter to Nana Fadnavis, Mahadji wrote: "We serve a common master (i.e. the Peshva); let our exertions be directed to the common cause;... let the cause of the Maratha nation be upheld in Hindusthan, and prevent our Empire from being disunited and overthrown." Before effective help could reach him from the Deccan, however, the worst horrors were perpetrated by the Afghans in Delhi, during the enforced absence of Mahadji. The spoliation of the city and the blinding of the miserable Emperor Shah Alam, by the fiendish Ghulam Qadir (son of Zabita Khan), were part of these atrocities. At last retribution came when, as the result of his defeat and flight, Ghulam Qadir was hanged on a roadside tree, after being blinded and mutilated by Mahadji's soldiers, on 3rd March 1789. Once again the hapless Emperor was reinstated at Delhi by the arms of the Marathas, and "the homage of the Peshva and his Deputy was duly presented".

The situation in the South which the Marathas were called upon to face was not entirely of their making. It was a quadrangular struggle between the Marathas, the Nizam, Haidar Ali, and the English. Since the withdrawal of de Bussy from Hyderabad, however, the Nizam had come under the power of the English. Though Nizam Ali was by no means friendly towards the Marathas, he had been too thoroughly neutralised by the Peshva Madhavrao I in 1763 to be of any great consequence. Thereafter he only played a subordinate role as an ally of one or the other among the remaining powers. In the war that the English waged simultaneously with Haidar Ali and the Marathas (i.e., between 1780 and 1782), the Nizam was placated by the restoration of Guntur to Basalat Jang after its unwarranted seizure by the Company's officers at Madras. Haidar, who was determined to drive the English out of the country, might have welcomed assistance from any of his neighbours. Nizam Ali being neutralised by his enemies, an alliance with the Marathas was not beyond the scope of practical politics. Hence, although hostilities had ceased between the English and the Marathas, and the Treaty of Salbai had been agreed to by Mahadji Shinde in May 1782, Nana Fadnavis deferred signing it until the issue between the

English and Haider should be decided. But Haider died unexpectedly on 7th December 1782, and the war was continued by his son Tipu. Consequently, Nana Fadnavis ratified the treaty with the English on 26th February following.

There was little love lost between Tipu and the Marathas. He was less tactful and more implacable than his father Haider. Yet the Governor of Madras, Lord Macartney, concluded the Treaty of Mangalore with him, in March 1784, to the great chagrin of Warren Hastings. When Lord Cornwallis became Governor-General in 1786, however, the situation once again changed. In March 1788 he wrote to Malet, English Resident in Poona, "I look upon a rupture with Tipu as a certain and immediate consequence of a war with France, and in that event a vigorous co-operation of the Marathas would be of the utmost importance to our interests in the country." The result was that when the Third Anglo-Mysore War broke out, as a consequence of Tipu's attack on Travancore, in December 1789, both the Nizam and the Marathas joined the English. In reward for this service the Nizam got territory between the Krishna and Pennar rivers, while the Marathas acquired the region down to the Tungabhadra which they had lost by the aggressions of Haider and Tipu. The Treaty of Srirangapatna (1792) by which Tipu was compelled to surrender these and other territories to the English was not calculated to ensure peace in the South for long. Another Mysore War, final and conclusive, followed out of Tipu's intrigues with the French and Wellesley's Imperialistic policy. "The Tiger of Mysore" died fighting at Srirangapatna on 4th May 1799, and the old Hindu dynasty of Mysore was reinstated under the aegis of the British. The Nizam was an active ally of the English and was further rewarded with additions to his territories on the north-east of Mysore. This, however, was only a temporary gain. He had already entered into the 'subsidiary system' in 1798. In 1800 by another Treaty he was obliged to part with his recent acquisitions of territory between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers in payment for British protection. The Marathas were also "allies", but they did not participate in the final overthrow of Tipu. Nevertheless, Wellesley thought it politic to offer them a share in the spoils of victory 'on condition that the Peshva should enter into definite agreement against the French and undertake never to employ Europeans without the Company's consent, and should guarantee the inviolability of the new State to be erected in Mysore'. This the Marathas refused.

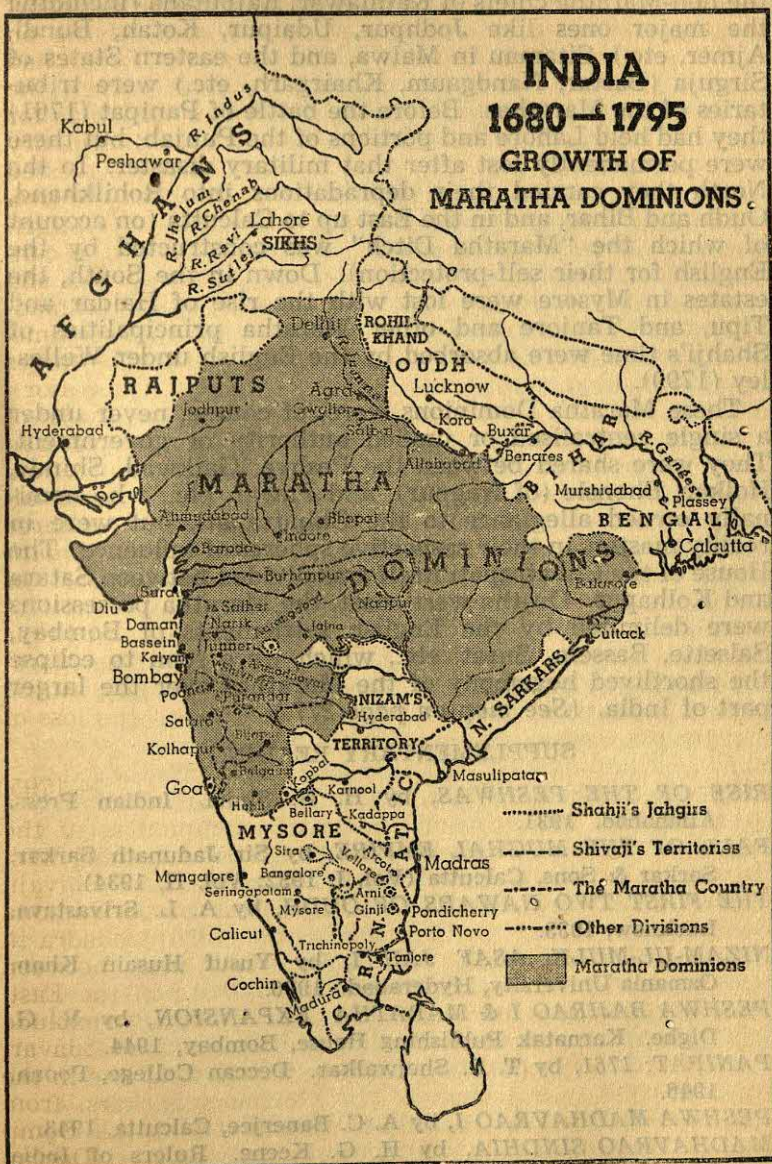
Hutton, the biographer of Wellesley, has attributed the Maratha rejection to their "extraordinary blindness". But we must look for other reasons. The man responsible for that rejection was the astute Nana Fadnavis. Despite the extraordinary difficulties with which he was surrounded, he had consistently and steadily refused to be drawn into any subservient alliance with the British. Considering the fate of the rulers of Hyderabad, Mysore, and even Poona, when both Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnavis were dead, we cannot agree that the Marathas were "blind" in rejecting the "Imperial" offers of Wellesley. So long as Nana was alive, even Wellesley felt baffled. "Hitherto", he confessed in 1800, "either the capricious temper of Bajirao, or some remains of the characteristic jealousy of the nation with regard to foreign relations, have frustrated my object and views". Nana Fadnavis died on 13th March 1800, and Bajirao walked into the English trap by the end of 1802. No wonder that Col. Palmer (British Resident in Poona) exclaimed on the death of Nana: "With him departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government." Retaining the independence of the Marathas, he had not refused to co-operate with either the Nizam or the English. When Tipu made a gratuitous attack on the Maratha territories in 1785, Nana, in co-operation with the Nizam, compelled him to surrender the districts of Badami, Kittur and Nargund, at the end of a campaign which terminated in April 1787. In the Third Anglo-Mysore War, he joined the English along with the Nizam against Tipu, and recovered old Maratha possessions down to the Tungabhadra, by the Treaty of Srirangapatna (1792). The Marathas were still strong at this time, and there was no suggestion of subordination to any of their allies. On the other hand, they could act alone if necessary, and with vigor, when their jealous allies stood aloof. Mahadji Shinde demonstrated this, in 1789, in North India in the face of a formidable combination of all his enemies. Despite the personal jealousy existing between them, Nana too responded to the national call of Mahadji, stating: "They can never establish their supremacy at Delhi, if the Marathas act vigorously and in union." The master of the Emperor of Delhi, Mahadji Shinde, had the political tact to affect humility and submission to the Peshva, during his last visit to Poona in 1792. That served to prevent a rupture with the powerful Nana Fadnavis and thereby maintained the unity of the Marathas. Mahadji died at Vanaudi (near Poona) on 12th February 1794 and left the field clear for Nana Fadnavis. The remaining six years of the latter's life were full of internal turmoil which we shall examine

in another place. The climax of Maratha national effort was reached in 1795 when a preposterous challenge was thrown out by the Nizam. Counting upon English support in a possible contest with the Marathas, and relying on troops trained by the Frenchman Raymond, the Nizam had long evaded payments due to the Marathas. When the Maratha agent at Hyderabad made persistent demands for these payments, the Nizam's *diwan* made extraordinary counter-claims upon the Marathas and arrogantly suggested that, if there should be a trial of strength between the two, the Nizam would very soon send the Peshva on a pilgrimage to Benares in a bare *langoti* (loincloth). As a consequence, battle was joined between the Nizam's forces and the Marathas at Kharda (56 miles south-east of Ahmadnagar) in March 1795. On this occasion, for the last time, all the Maratha chiefs presented a united front. The forces of the Peshva, Daulatrao Shinde (Mahadji's successor), Tukojirao Holkar, the Gaikwad, and even the Raja of Berar, were all there under the command of the veteran Parshuram Bahu Patwardhan. In this decisive action, Nizam Ali was defeated, his *diwan*, the boastful Mashir-ul-Mulk, was taken prisoner, and a heavy indemnity of three *crores* of rupees was exacted besides the arrears of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* previously in demand; the fort of Daulatabad and all the territory from the river Tapti to Parenda was also ceded to the Peshva. The Raja of Berar obtained lands worth [Rs.] 3,18,000 annually. The Marathas routed in this battle an army of nearly 100,000, killing and wounding about 15,000 of the enemy, with the loss of hardly 100 men for themselves!

NOTE: THE EXTENT OF MARATHA DOMINIONS—1795.

It is difficult to mark out the precise boundaries of the Maratha Dominions as they stood in 1795. Beginning with the *jagirs* of Poona and Supa, in the boyhood of Shivaji, they gradually reached the southern bank of the Jamuna in the North to the northern bank of the Tungabhadra in the South, and included most of the territories between Cutch and Kathiawar in the West to Orissa in the East. Out of the vast territory thus indicated we have to exclude the Nizam's Dominions, south of the Wainganga-Godavari line in the North and the Tungabhadra-Krishna line in the South. The coastal strip of the Northern Sarkars, from Guntur to Cuttack, was also outside the Maratha Dominions. Approximately the western half of the Deccan plateau belonged to the Marathas, and the eastern half to the Nizam. This comprised, in its totality, practically the whole of the present State of Bombay, plus the western

parts of the Nizam's Dominions (covering Aurangabad and Bidar), C.P. and Berar, western parts of the Andhra



country, the Mahanadi delta (from Balasor to Cuttack), Bundelkhand and Central India, and the eastern parts of

Rajputana. Besides these, Mahadji Shinde held Delhi and Agra, with the Mughal Emperor in his custody. Most of the non-Maratha chiefs of Kathiawar, Rajputana (including the major ones like Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kotah, Bundi, Ajmer, etc.), Sitamau in Malwa, and the eastern States of Sirguja (Bastar, Nandgaum, Khairgarh, etc.) were tributaries of the Marathas. Before the battle of Panipat (1761) they had held Lahore and portions of the Punjab; but these were permanently lost after that military disaster. In the North they carried their depredations into Rohilkhand, Oudh and Bihar, and in the East up to Calcutta (on account of which the "Maratha Ditch" was constructed by the English for their self-protection). Down in the South, the estates in Mysore were lost with the rise of Haidar and Tipu, and Tanjore and other Maratha principalities of Shahji's time were absorbed by the English under Wellesley (1799).

These Maratha Dominions were, of course, never under a single centralised or unified authority or government. They were shared between the Peshva, Gaikwad, Shinde, Holkar, Bhonsle (of Nagpur), and Pawar, etc., who nominally owned allegiance to the Chhatrapati, but were in reality masters in their respective spheres of influence. The House of the Chhatrapati itself was divided between Satara and Kolhapur. On the west coast, the Maratha possessions were delimited by the English settlements of Bombay, Salsette, Bassein, Surat, etc., which were soon to eclipse the shortlived hegemony of the Marathas over the larger part of India. (See map on page 277.)

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CHAPTER TEN

MARATHA POLITY

1. *Introduction.* 2. *Political System.* 3. *Army and Navy.*
4. *Revenue and Justice.* 5. *Social and General.* 6. *Chhatrapatis*
and Peshvas. 7. *Causes of Failure.*

1. *Introduction*

IN THE preceding three chapters we noticed the rise, progress and culmination of the Maratha power, beginning with the small *jagir* of Poona and ending in an Empire that included the greater part of India for some time. The character of the polity aimed at or created by the Marathas during the period of their supremacy is a subject of controversy among scholars. British writers like Grant Duff and V. A. Smith looked upon the rise of the Maratha power as a parasitical growth which was the outcome of predatory warfare encouraged by the decadence of the Muhammadan powers. Maratha writers, led by the late Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade, have, on the other hand, ascribed to the builders of the Maratha Empire high and noble national ideals which they have tried to corroborate with the help of suggestive evidence. Among renowned scholars of the present day, Sir Jadunath Sarkar has shown strong inclinations towards the former group, and Rao Bahadur Sardesai towards the latter school. It must, however, be noted that Sarkar has written enough by way of appreciation and Sardesai enough by way of criticism, that each one of them might protest against the categorical classification suggested above. Nevertheless, the balance of their judgment or verdict will be found, on impartial examination, to be not different from our characterisation here. We shall cite the evidence without anticipating the conclusions.

The British characterisation of the Marathas was vitiated by two inherent factors: (i) prejudice born of their having been recent enemies, and (ii) their lack of acquaintance with the real sources of information. Indian writers who have largely depended on Mughal and European sources have also been incurably biased; they have failed to appreciate the value of Maratha sources which have come to light in more recent times. It is obvious common sense that too much emphasis on hostile witnesses is bound to warp the judgment. Of course, it is equally necessary that too high a premium ought not to be set upon patriotic literature which is likely to be uncritically sentimental. But there can be no true historical insight without

sympathy. Indeed there is considerable force in Dr. S. N. Sen's argument: "It is very difficult to understand how an Empire could last for over a century and half by robbery and plunder alone," he writes, "unless it had a surer and firmer basis of good government." It is equally patent that its passing away was due to certain fatal weaknesses and defects to which we should not remain blind. We shall first try to understand the basic qualities; then we shall examine the criticism.

From the point of view of the evolution of modern India, there is a vital interest attaching to the study of Maratha Polity. As Dr. Sen has pointed out, the Marathas derived their institutions and ideas from their Hindu and Muslim predecessors, and such a study "supplies an important and interesting illustration of interaction of Hindu and Muslim principles on each other, and it helps us to understand the growth of the present British Indian administrative institutions, partly engrafted as they are on older Hindu and Muhammadan systems".

Our account of Maratha Polity to be authentic must make use of the following among other contemporary materials: (1) *Adnapatra* by Ramachandra Amatya; (2) *Rajavyavaharakosha* attributed to Raghunath Pandit; (3) the account of Sabhasad with additions on the duties of the Secretariat officers by Chitragupta; and (4) the *Peshva Daftar*.

2. Political System

The Political System of the Marathas has not been so closely studied as the Mughal and British systems, though it was sandwiched between the two. It is necessary to distinguish between *Svarajya* and *Samrajya* for this purpose. The former referred to the homelands of the Marathas, and the latter to the territories outside Maharashtra. The provinces of the Mughal Empire overrun by the Marathas were called *Mughlai*. The two divisions were not treated on equal terms. *Svarajya* was better organised than the *Samrajya* or *Mughlai*. The reason for this was that the homelands differed from the conquered territories in important respects. In the first place, the Maratha country was directly under the Chhatrapati's and Peshva's administration, and for a longer time, so that it afforded fuller scope for the evolution of settled government. Secondly, ethnically and culturally, it was more homogeneous than the far-flung dominions. Thirdly, the process of conquest was so prolonged and partial, and the conditions obtaining in the different parts of the country were so varied, that harmonious and complete assimilation was not to be expected. The conquered territories were only gradually brought

into approximate conformity with the pattern of the home government. The extent and speed with which this was done depended on the proportion of the Maratha population transplanted and settled in the new provinces. Since this varied from one part of the country to another, there were bound to be differences in the character of the Maratha administration in different parts of the Empire. To cite the most prominent examples: Baroda, Indore and Gwalior, have each some local colour that serves to distinguish it from the others. Tanjore in the Tamil country, Baroda in the Gujarati setting, and the Central Indian States in a totally different atmosphere, could not be expected to answer exactly to the pattern of either Kolhapur or Poona. Besides, in a monarchical and semi-feudal world, the personal factor counted for much. The administrative system of a warrior like Mahadji Shinde, for example, could not be identical with that of the peaceful and statesmanlike Ahilyabai Holkar; nor that of Shahu anything like the system built up by the genius of his gifted grandfather Shivaji. Even in the family of the Peshvas there were variations from generation to generation: the greatest administrators among them were Balaji Bajirao and Madhavrao I. Others no doubt made their own contributions, but we shall assess these in the last section of this chapter.

The Maratha political system was partly the creation of Shivaji and partly that of the Peshvas. We can roughly ascribe the organisation of *Svarajya* to the former and of the *Samrajya* to the latter. Under Shivaji there was greater centralisation than was found possible under the Peshvas. With the exception of the appanage of Tanjore, Shivaji conquered only as much as he could directly and personally administer with the help of ministers and other officers appointed, supervised and controlled by himself. His compact and close-knit kingdom was organised and governed on principles partly borrowed or adapted from his contemporary world (both Hindu and Muslim), and partly inspired by the ancient traditions of the country, modified by practical and rational considerations. This will become apparent as we proceed with the detailed examination of the various departments and aspects of Maratha administration, but we may refer here in advance to a few general features.

Though Shivaji could not escape from the use of the Persian language and the Muslim designations of some of his officers, his political system was moulded by Hindu thought and tradition. His *Svarajya* was established over the *mulk-i-qadim*, but it was not characterised by the spirit of *dar-ul-Islam*. *Maharashtra Dharma* was territorial, not

religious: i.e. unlike his Muslim contemporary, Aurangzeb, Shivaji did not condition the protection and privileges afforded to various classes of his subjects by the religion they professed. But more about this later.

Neither in Hindu theory, nor in the Islamic, was the king or head of the State above law. *Dharma* ruled all, from the king to the meanest peasant. But subject to this overall limitation, the Chhatrapati was supreme in the Maratha State. He continued to be so in theory even when, after the death of Shahu, he was reduced to a cipher by the Peshvas. He was, according to Shivaji's system, assisted by a Council of Eight Ministers (Ashta-Pradhans): (1) Mukhya Pradhan (Peshva), (2) Amatya (Mujumdar), (3) Mantri (Waqia-navis), (4) Sachiv (Shuru-navis), (5) Sumant (Dabir), (6) Pandit Rao (Sadr), (7) Nyayadhish (Qazi-ul-quzat), and (8) Senapati (Sar-i-naubat). When Rajaram was at Ginji he created the new office of Pratinidhi (Naib), while the homeland was placed under the charge of Ramchandra Amatya who was styled Hukmatpanah (Dictator). These changes showed that Maratha Polity was not static but dynamic; it could adjust itself to changing requirements. But, in the course of time, the changes did not always turn out for the better. The Council of Ministers was, in the time of Shahu, superseded by the Peshvas who rapidly eclipsed the Chhatrapati on the one side, and the other colleagues of the Raj-Mandal (Ashta-Pradhans) on the other. "The change," writes M. G. Ranade, "meant the conversion of the organic whole into an inorganic mass, and it reproduced the old Mahomedan methods of single rule, against which Shivaji had successfully struggled when he organised the Raj-Mandal." It is a misnomer to describe the Council of Eight as a "cabinet". It had none of the attributes of a modern democratic cabinet. They had no joint responsibility and, under Shivaji, they were all equally dependent on the will of the sovereign. When the Peshvas reduced the Chhatrapati to a nonentity they paved the way for their example to be copied by other officers.

Shivaji had tried to counteract some of the worst evils of his times by defeudalising his kingdom as far as possible. He had superseded the hereditary dictatorships of the Deshmukhs in the districts by state officials appointed by himself and holding office during good behaviour. The Peshva too was originally subject to the same condition. No *saranjams* or estates were granted on feudal terms. But from the time of Rajaram, owing to the anarchical conditions, the salutary principles of Shivaji were abandoned with fatal consequences. The Maratha generals, like Shinde, Holkar, Gaikwad, etc., who extended the Maratha

dominions, tended to break away from the central allegiance when the Peshva usurped the place of the Chhatrapati. Those who were originally servants of a common master were not inclined to submit to any one of them under the changed circumstances. Even the *sardars* (who were the creatures of the first two Peshvas) soon came to realise their own importance, by virtue of the *de facto* power they wielded, and were not amenable to the central control of the later Peshvas. Even then, it is misleading to speak of the "Maratha Confederacy" comprised by the Peshva, Shinde, Holkar and others. For one thing, there was no constitutional basis on which the so-called "confederacy" rested. It was not so deliberately or formally organised. However loose the structure, the Maratha State was still a unitary monarchy with the Chhatrapati as its sovereign head. The Peshva as well as all other *sardars* owed and owned theoretical allegiance to that central authority in whose name everything was done, even when the Chhatrapati had been reduced to a shadow or mockery. The insignia of the Peshva's office continued to be received at the hands of the puppet Chhatrapati, upto the last, and even the powerful Mahadji Shinde kept up the show of being the Peshva's humble servant at a formal *darbar*. Members of "confederacies", as they are understood in history and politics, have acted differently. It was, however, convenient for the enemies of the Marathas to invent this fiction of a "Maratha Confederacy", so that they might enter into separate engagements with its members severally to suit their own purpose of *divide et impera*.

At the bottom of the Maratha political system was the village community. This has indeed been always the case with the whole of India. The universal prevalence of this element at all times in our country has saved and preserved our civilisation and culture despite the vicissitudes of our political history. "In whatever point of view we examine the native government in the Deccan," observed Elphinstone, "the first and the most important feature is the division into villages and townships. These communities contain, in miniature, all the materials of a State within themselves and are almost sufficient to protect their members, if all other governments were withdrawn." The Patil was the prop of the village administration. He was assisted by a Kulkarni and a Panchayat who enjoyed the confidence of all the villagers. The Chaugula and the Potdar were the other two servants of the local administration. All important transactions and documents were to be attested by the *Balutas* who were traditionally twelve in number: Kulkarni, Potdar, Joshi, Gurav, Lohar, Kumbhar, Parit, Nhavi,

Sutar, Chambhar, Mahar and Mang. Between themselves, from the Patil to the Mang, they represented all the communities living in the village. The Patil was invariably a Maratha, and the Kulkarni and Joshi (clerk and astrologer) alone were Brahmans. The Potdar or assayer of coins was usually a Sonar or goldsmith. In the days before Shivaji, the local landlords (Mirasdars), the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes, were the *de facto* rulers of the outlying districts. With the creation of a central administration, they were superseded by government officials like the Kamavisdars and Mamlatdars. While the traditional servants were hereditary, the new officials were appointees of the government subject to transfer or dismissal. In the towns the Kotwal was an important officer—as under the Mughals. A document of the time of Madhavrao, dated 1767-8, enumerates his duties as follows: (1) to settle important disputes, (2) to fix the prices of commodities, (3) to supply labourers to government, (4) to supervise the sale and purchase of lands and collect the fees of such transactions, (5) to take the census and keep a record of persons entering and leaving the city, (6) to advise government on the amendment of regulations, (7) demarcation of boundaries of lanes, roads and houses, and (8) regulation of gambling.

3. Army and Navy

The Maratha State has been described by Sir Jadunath Sarkar as a *Krieg-staat* by which he implies “a government that lives and grows only by wars of aggression”. This is a half-truth that requires considerable elucidation to avoid misunderstanding. In the first place, it is necessary to remember that the Maratha State came into existence as the outcome of a war of liberation from the shackles of Mughal and Bijapur domination. In the time of Shivaji, it is difficult to characterise any of his campaigns as “wars of aggression”. Some of them constituted “offensive actions” in the military sense—like his raids on Surat. Shivaji justified his expeditions into *Mughlai*, with the collection of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* and other booty, by arguing that the Mughal Emperor’s invasion of Maharashtra had forced the Marathas to take up arms in defence of their country and hence there was nothing wrong in maintaining his army at the cost of his enemy. In a sense, this was more logical than Napoleon Bonaparte’s feeding of his army on the loot of Italy and other countries whose national soil he violated by his aggressive campaigns. Shivaji’s wars against the Mughal Empire, or even Bijapur (in so far as it ruled over Maratha territory), could not be characterised as wars of aggression. But his Karnatak

expedition and invasion of the Tamil country were a shade different. Though Shahji and his son Vyankoji had already established Maratha rule in those regions, and Shivaji was only consolidating their acquisitions, it was really a campaign of aggression. The Maratha explanation that they were out to establish Hindpad-shahi all over Hindusthan cannot be sustained. Under the Peshvas, particularly, the Marathas were more and more exposing themselves to the implied charge of their critics. We may therefore say that "Krieg-staat" is more applicable to Maratha *Samrajya* than to Maratha *Svarajya*. It is, however, just possible that Shivaji regarded his Karnatak campaign as an inevitable part of his strategy against his enemies. On the whole, a careful study of the civil achievements of the Marathas will serve to modify or qualify their characterisation as having "grown only by wars of aggression". Here primarily we are concerned with their military and naval organisation.

No State can exist without a strong and efficient force to defend it. Babur and Akbar founded the Mughal Empire by their military superiority over their enemies. The might of Aurangzeb could not prevail over the Maratha resistance because of certain qualities which the Marathas displayed in their fight against the Imperial and local Muslim powers. Those qualities were partly inherent in the Maratha national character, and partly developed by historical forces. From Malik Ambar to Shivaji, the Marathas had been trained in arms to good purpose, and their native toughness of fibre had been strengthened by the will to be free, in the first instance, in the interests of *Maharashtra Dharma*. Shivaji moulded, from the tame Mavales of his homelands, a mighty military force, and made of the Marathas a power to reckon with, not only in the Deccan but also, ultimately, in India. Its defensive force was transformed into an aggressive avalanche by the military genius of the warlike Peshva Bajirao I.

No other part of India is studded with so many fortresses as Maharashtra. They call them *Killas*, which are of three classes: *gad*, *kot* and *durg*. The first are built on the prominent tops of hills; the second on level country, *desh*; and the last along the sea-shore or on crags and islands near the coast. The *Adnapatra* gives detailed practical instructions on the construction of forts and declares: "The chief means for the protection of the kingdom are forts. If there are no forts, during a foreign invasion, the open country becomes supportless and is easily desolated. A country without forts is like a land protected only by the passing clouds." In times of danger they sheltered the population



and normally acted as storehouses of grain, ammunition and all valuables. They were garrisoned with regular troops officered by a *Havaladar* who was a Maratha, a *Sabnis* who was a Brahman, and a *Karkhanis* who was a Prabhu (Kayastha). Besides these, there were Ramoshis who did the policing of the outskirts or scouting. "In this manner was the administration of the fort carefully and newly organised," writes Sabhasad, "no single individual could surrender the fort to any rebel or miscreant."

The army was mainly composed of infantry and cavalry, though other auxiliaries like elephants and camels, etc., came to be used in course of time. They were armed with swords, spears, bows, matchlocks, and artillery to a certain extent. The recruitment, in Shivaji's time, was done by him after careful personal inspection. In the beginning, the Maratha army was a national militia; but under the Peshvas, mercenaries of all nationalities (including non-Indians like Pathans, Arabs and Europeans) also came to be enrolled. There were two classes of troops: the regular *bargirs* (equipped and maintained by government) and the *shiledars* or freelancers who brought their own horses and equipment. Both were, however, subject to the same discipline under the *Sarnobat* (*Sar-i-naubat*) or commander-in-chief. This discipline, in the time of Shivaji, was very rigorous and exacting. Cowardice was ruthlessly punished, and no soldier could take a woman during campaigns. The death-penalty was imposed upon those who broke these rules. The campaigning season lasted for eight months in the year, starting with *Dasarah* and ending with the advent of the rains, generally. Shivaji and Bajirao, however, like Napoleon, did not allow military activities to be governed by the seasons.

The unit of the State cavalry (*paga*) was 25 *bargirs* under a *havaladar*. There was a *jumladar* over every 5 *havaldars*, and one *hazari* over 10 *jumladars*. The 5-*hazari* in the cavalry and 7-*hazari* in the infantry were the highest ranks, with the *Sarnobat* above them. A slight variation in the case of the infantry was that the unit of the *paiks* (privates) was 9; over them was a *naik*. Over 5 *naiks* was one *havaladar*, with a *jumladar* over every two *havaldars*, and a *hazari* over every 10 *jumladars*. There were *Karkuns*, couriers, spies, water-carriers, farriers, etc., with every unit—all under the command and discipline of the *Sarnobat*. Everything was minutely planned, and Shivaji's instructions, as recorded by Sabhasad, included caution against mice that might start a conflagration in camp, if the wicks of the oil-lamps were not carefully guarded from them!

All were paid in cash. A *hazari* was paid 1000 *hons* a year; and a 5-*hazari* not more than 2000 *hons*. A *jumladar* received 100 to 125 *hons*. The belongings of every trooper were carefully enumerated at the commencement of an expedition, and again at the end of it. The difference, comprising the booty, was to be handed over to the State treasury; not a needle or a pie was allowed to be retained by the soldiers. The accounts of military income and disbursements were prepared and submitted over the signatures of four officers: the *hazari*, *mujumdar*, *karbhari* and *jam-navis*.

The morale of the army under Shivaji has been attested by Khafi Khan, already cited. He never allowed a copy of the holy *Quran*, or the women belonging to the enemy, to be appropriated by anyone; they were returned to the legitimate persons.

Few Indian rulers since the great maritime days when Indians traded with Rome in the West and China in the East—activities that resulted in the Indian colonisation of South-East Asia—cared for the seas. The Mughals maintained a small fleet to carry pilgrims to Mecca, and for merchantile purposes; but they were essentially a continental race. Even for protection from the pirates, they were at the mercy of the European adventurers. Realising this weakness, Shivaji tried to build a navy for the Marathas and, considering the shortness of time, achieved remarkable success. "Just as the King's success on land depends on the strength of his cavalry," says the *Adna-patra*, "so the mastery of the sea belongs to him who possesses a navy." Then it proceeds to lay down practical rules for the construction of ships and harbours. Their purpose was both commercial and naval. "Foreign ships without permits should be subjected to inspection", states the same authority; but "by assuring safety to seafaring merchants at various ports, they should be allowed freedom of intercourse in trade". There was a Muslim *Darya-sarang* and a Hindu *Mai-naik* in charge of the fleet. Malwan (Sindhudurg), Vijayadurg (Gheria), Vengurla and Ratnagiri were some of the important Maratha ports. By the acquisition of Bassein from the Portuguese, they got another important base on the west coast. At Kalyan, Bhiwandi, etc., Shivaji had built his earliest ship-building yards. According to Sabhasad, 700 Maratha ships were out at one time on the seas. They traded as far as Mocha in Western Arabia. Under the Peshvas, "Maratha traders actually settled in Arabian coast towns like Muscat, and their trading vessels visited China" (S. N. Sen). Shivaji's victory over the English in the severely fought action at

'Henri-Kenri' off the island of Bombay in January 1680, was his greatest naval triumph. That reputation was sustained by Kanhoji Angre ("Shivaji of the seas"), until it was undermined by the Peshvas in combination with the English.

4. Revenue and Justice

It is not easy to give a satisfactory account of the Revenue and Judicial administration, covering so vast a period as that from Shivaji to the last Peshva, within a short compass. We can do no more than indicate here some of its main features. As in most other aspects, we must remember the distinction between the *Svarajya* and *Samrajya* territories. So far as the central government was concerned, the only share of the resources it got from the outlying territories was by way of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. The former constituted 1/4 of the total revenue and the latter an additional 1/10, 25 per cent. of the *chauth* and the whole of the *sardeshmukhi* went into the King's Treasury; the rest was absorbed, in Balaji Visvanath's system, by the various officers: 6 per cent. *sahotra* to the Pant Sachiv, 3 per cent. *nadgauda* to different persons according to the wishes of the King, and the remainder to the *mokasa* holders or *jagirdars* for maintaining troops in the *chauthai* tracts. In return, the taxed areas were supposed to get protection from the Maratha rulers. Hence this arrangement has been likened to the "subsidiary system" of Wellesley by some writers. Others have vehemently denied that the *chauth*-collecting Marathas afforded any protection at all. It may be noted, however, that one of the *sanads* granted to Shahu by the Mughal Emperor legally entitled the Marathas to these levies from the six Mughal *subahs* of the Deccan, in return for a force of 15,000 Maratha troops needed for the protection of those provinces. These rights were further recognised from time to time by the Emperor in respect of other northern provinces occupied by the Maratha generals. The Nizam too was obliged to recognise these levies, right from the time of Asaf Jah. Thus from what might have been originally blackmail, *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* came to be legitimate sources of revenue for the Maratha State.

In *Svarajya*, and wherever the Marathas established regular settled government, the chief sources of revenue were: (1) land-revenue, (2) customs duties, (3) taxes on professions, (4) monopolies, (5) mints, (6) judicial fines, (7) miscellaneous cesses, etc. Of these we shall examine land-revenue as the most important.

Before Shivaji established his benevolent administration, the cultivators were at the mercy of the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes. The revenue collection was arbitrary and tyrannical. Shivaji replaced that feudal oppression by organising a system of just and scientific assessment, following on the lines of Todar Mall and Malik Ambar. The lands were regularly surveyed and classified according to their quality and yield. "The area of each village was thus ascertained in detail," writes Sabhasad, "an estimate was made of the expected produce of each *bigha* three parts of which were left to the peasant, and two parts taken by the State... New ryots who came to settle were given money for seeds and cattle, the amount being recovered in two or four annual instalments." Over *mahals* yielding a revenue of 75,000—125,000 *hons*, a *subahdar* and a *mujumdar* were appointed. The former was paid 400 *hons* per year, and the latter 100-125 *hons*. Starting with the hereditary village Patil and Kulkarni, and the official Karkuns and Kamavisdars, there was an army of servants reaching up to the central Secretariat. Luckily for the modern student of history, there are thousands of original papers and documents preserved in the Peshva Daftar (at Poona) which throw ample light on the working of the public administration of the Marathas in the various departments. For the general reader, a few glimpses are afforded by Dr. S. N. Sen in his *Administrative System of the Marathas*.

The process of revenue collection is thus described by Dr. Sen:

When the time for collection came, the Mahar called the rate-payers to the village *Chawdi* where the Patil held his office. The Kulkarni or the village account-keeper was present there with his records to assist the Patil in his work, and so were Potdars. The latter assayed and stamped the money when paid, for which the rent-payer got a receipt from the Kulkarni. When the collection was over, the money was sent to the Kamavisdar with a letter under the charge of the Chaugula, and a similar letter, often a duplicate copy, was sent to the Deshmukh, under the charge of the Mahar. The Chaugula got a receipt from the Mamlatdar for the sum paid, which was carefully preserved in the Kulkarni's bundle of village accounts. Sometimes a *Shibandi* was sent by the officer in charge of the district or *Tarf* to help the Patil in his work of collection. The revenue was generally paid in four instalments and sometimes in three.

The main principles on which the revenue system was organised were: increase of agricultural wealth and an eye to the welfare of the cultivators. Lands were classified as

superior, ordinary, or inferior. Those watered from canals were distinguished from those watered from wells, as also garden lands from fields producing agricultural crops. Special encouragement was afforded to those bringing waste-lands under cultivation, by the grant of *Tagai* loans and concessions in the payment of taxes. Mortgage of lands was prohibited. Animals purchased for agricultural purposes were exempted from *octroi* for five years. Slack or rapacious officers, who either neglected to encourage cultivation or collected more than government dues, were punished. Irrigation works were either undertaken by Government or subsidised. "Whenever the country needed such relief, leases varying from three to seven years were granted on the terms of *Istwas*, i.e., gradually increasing assessments" (Ranade).

The results of such a policy are reflected in a casual way by Captain William Gordon, who wrote in 1739: "Bajirao has a great extent of country, to appearance more fertile and valuable than any other I had passed through... His territories are well peopled, and the poorer sort, in the farming way, are rendered easy in their rents, which causes his extent of dominion to be in a very flourishing condition". When the English conquered the Peshva's territories, they found their system to be good enough to be substantially continued. According to Lt.-Col. Blacker, the Peshva's "clear Revenue was two crores and ten lacs of rupees annually".

Mr. Justice Ranade has observed that, whatever other lapses the later Peshvas may have been guilty of, "it must in justice to them be admitted that, in the matter of the revenue and judicial management, the Government at Poona showed great powers of application, careful elaboration of detail, and an honest desire to administer well the charge entrusted to them". This is fully borne out by a detailed examination of specific cases on record. Hundreds of *Mahzars* and *Nivada-patras* or decisions by the *Diwan* (composed of local officials), *Gota* (formed mostly by the local *Vatandars*), and the Peshvas, are available. The traditions of Shivaji were revived particularly with the appointment of Rama Shastri as *Nyayadhis* in the time of Madhavrao I. There was a Chief Court of appeal established in Poona, with subordinate courts in other places. There were *Huzur Panchayats*, as well as *Brahma-Sabhas* and *Jati-Sabhas*. "The general arrangement appears to have been that the Kamavisdar, besides his revenue duties, had both civil and criminal powers attached to his office." There was no place for lawyers. Arbitrators were chosen from the neighbourhood after the parties to a dispute had

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stated their respective cases, corroborated by witnesses, oaths and solemn asseverations. The decision of the Kama-visdars only gave effect to the verdict of the arbitrators.

Barring a few exceptions, in extreme cases, where mutilations and trial by ordeal were ordered, punishments were generally mild and humane. In the time of Shahu, in criminal cases, "the only punishments judicially administered were penal servitude, imprisonment in the forts, confiscation of property, fine, and in a few cases, banishment beyond the frontiers". The following table will illustrate the truth of this observation:

Ruler	Crime	Acquittals	Punishments
SHAHU	Murders 8	5	Fine and imprisonment 3
BALAJI BAJIRAO	20	3	Heavy fine 8; confiscation * of property 9.
MADHAVRAO I	7	Nil	Fine 3; confiscation of Vatan 3; confinement in fort 1*.
NANA FADNAVIS	2+	Nil	Death 2; imprisonment, fine and confiscation for the rest.

In keeping with the traditions of the country, the Peshvas went out on tours of investigation, heard complaints, and awarded punishments. Broughton was struck with the ease with which Daulatrao Shinde could be approached, even while he was out on an expedition, by the seekers of justice. The great Rama Shastri heard complaints and witnesses even at home, but his integrity was never impugned. Such informality has led some critics to doubt the standards of justice administered. Of course there were no such guarantees as are obtaining at present. Political prisoners were often treated with great cruelty and injustice because they were rivals in power. Nana Fadnavis' treatment of the supporters of Raghoba is a case in point.

5. Social and General

In this brief history it is not possible to find much space for a detailed study of the social conditions; but a few illustrative facts may be noticed. Maratha society was less conservative and more progressive than is generally believed; at any rate this is true of their government. Superstitions did prevail and persist. Hence there was recourse to trial by ordeal; *shanti* rites, involving the feeding of hundreds of Brahmans, were performed to avert

* In cases of confiscation, compensation was given to the heirs. The murderer confined in a fort was a Brahman. High treason was punished with being trampled by elephants.

calamities like earthquakes, epidemics and lightning strokes; and official measures were taken to exorcise witchcraft. Sections of the society were also caste-ridden and intolerant in the matter of breaches of tradition and convention. It therefore implies great courage on the part of Government to have tried to regulate social life, against the grain of the majority. But this is just the duty of all progressive governments. The personal lives of the Peshvas were not without serious blemishes; they might have succeeded better if they had begun reform with themselves.

The Marathas are a practical people, and their history bears witness to this traditional characteristic. In an earlier chapter we outlined the *Bhakti* movement which was the spiritual forerunner of the political rise of the Marathas. One of its outstanding features was the revolt against religious conservatism. It broke caste-conventions and revealed progressive trends, right from the beginning. The lives of Dnaneshvar and Eknath bear witness to this. In the time of Shivaji, persons forcibly converted to Islam were readmitted into their original caste after ceremonial purification. Shivaji's own deferred *upanayana* could be performed at his *rajyabhisheka*, when he was already married more than once and a father! Netaji Palkar's is a well known example of reconversion. The Peshvas, being Brahmans, might have been expected to be more orthodox; yet they revealed surprising inclinations to reform. Bajirao did not succeed in absorbing Mastani into his family; but that he conceived of such a step indicated his adventurous nature. There are other instances of a varied character to illustrate how the rigidity of caste regulations and taboos was relaxed wherever found necessary.

The most striking characteristic of the religious policy was its toleration of all faiths. We have remarked before that, although the Marathas waged constant war against the Muhammadan powers, theirs was essentially a political rather than a religious struggle. Neither Shivaji nor the Peshvas placed any disabilities on the Muslims, and both employed them in their service, military as well as civil. Likewise, they extended patronage to their religious men and participated in their festivities. Shivaji tried to maintain social balance by the proper distribution of the services among all castes, each according to its inherited aptitude. Careers were really open to talent under him. But, in course of time, the Peshvas developed a bias for Brahmans. There were at one stage restrictions on the Prabhus in the matter of *upanayana* and the use by them of Vedic mantras, though these were later removed on appeal. Prabhus were classed with the *shudras* and ordered to

rainy. Thus the unity of the whole of Maharashtra was achieved under the statesmanlike regime of Shahu, the last of the great Chhatrapatis. He wielded an influence which was almost like power, as that of Queen Victoria in England in the latter half of last century, though the Peshvas were, in the meanwhile, steadily building up their dominating authority. The Chhatrapatis who followed were pitiable puppets of the Peshvas.

The Peshva's post was not hereditary, as we noted before, in the time of Shivaji. When Rajaram created the new office of Pratinidhi during his Ginji exile, that dignitary was paid a salary higher than the Peshva. Nevertheless, with the appointment of Balaji Vishvanath Bhat as Peshva under Shahu, a new chapter was opened, not only in the order of precedence in the Maratha ministry, but also in the character and history of the entire Maratha State. Thenceforward the office of Peshva became hereditary in the house of Balaji. The other ministers of the Raj Mandal, with the exception of the Fadnavis and Mujumdar, dropped out one by one. Continuing to receive the insignia of office at the hands of the titular Chhatrapati, the Peshvas became *de facto* masters over all. After the death of Shahu they transferred the seat of government from Satara to Poona. The Chhatrapati at Satara was assigned a pension of Rs. 30,000 a year. To this pittance minor additions were later made by the magnanimity of Madhavrao and Nana Fadnavis. The title of *Vakil-i-mutluq* was nonetheless accepted by the Peshva with the "permission" of the Chhatrapati at Satara. But the same fate overtook the last of the Peshvas when Nana Fadnavis became the Peshva's maker and *de facto* master. Bajirao II ended his days as a pensioner of the British.

It is clear from the above account that, just as the Chhatrapatis were not all alike in their character, capacities or fortunes, so were the Peshvas different from one another in these respects. The first of them, Balaji Vishvanath, though less is known about him than about the rest, appears to have been a man of administrative, diplomatic, and military capacity. He reorganised the finances as well as the army, and acquired from Shahu the title of "Sena-Karta". He also obtained from the Mughal Emperor the important *sanads* of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in the six Imperial *subahs* of the Deccan. This was the corridor through which the Marathas pushed into northern India. The second Peshva, Bajirao I, was a brilliant soldier, and carved out an Empire for his race in Hindusthan. But his financial capacity was zero. In spite of all the plunder he gathered in his expeditions, he died heavily indebted. The

public debt during the period 1740-60 is estimated by Ranade at a crore and a half. "The strain represented by this amount," he writes, "will be better understood when it is mentioned that the Peshva's Government had to pay from 12 to 18 per cent. interest on these loans." Much of that debt was due to Bajirao's extravagant military expenditure and that of his son Raghoba. Both of them earned for the Marathas a military reputation which proved fatal to the State in more senses than one.

The tribute paid by Grant Duff to Balaji Bajirao, the next Peshva, was well merited. We make no excuse for reproducing it in full:

Balaji Bajirao was one of those princes whose good fortune originating in causes anterior to their time, obtained in consequence of national prosperity, a higher degree of celebrity than they may fully merit. He was a man of considerable political sagacity, of polished manners and of great address. The territory under the care of the Peshwa had been in a progressive state of improvement. Balaji Bajirao appointed fixed Mamlatdars or Subahdars each of whom had charge of several districts. They held absolute charge of the police, the revenue and the civil and criminal judicature, and in most cases had power of life and death. The commencement of a better system of administration, particularly for Maharashtra, is ascribed to Ramchandra Baba Shenwee, and after his death Sadashivrao improved on his suggestions. A Shastree of respectability named Balkrishna Gadgil was appointed head of the Poona Nyayadhishi or court of justice, and the police was much invigorated at the capital. Under the government of Balajirao, Panchayats, the ordinary tribunals of civil justice, began to improve. The Maratha dominion attained its greatest extent under Balajirao's administration, and most of the principal Brahman families can only date their rise from that period. In short, the condition of the whole population was in his time improved and the Maratha peasantry, sensible of the comparative amelioration which they began to enjoy, have ever since blessed the days of Nana Saheb Peshwa.

Similar encomiums have been showered upon the more gifted though shortlived Peshva Madhavrao I. Judged by all standards, he was undoubtedly the greatest of the entire dynasty: as administrator and statesman certainly, and not less as a soldier. In diplomacy he surpassed all his predecessors. His minute attention to every detail of the day-to-day administration, his firmness in uprooting corruption, his keen anxiety to render impartial justice to all classes

of his subjects with the assistance of the great Rama Shastri, and his assiduous care of the peasantry, met with grateful appreciation by his contemporaries and admiration by historians ever since. In the words of Sardesai, "The very name of this Peshva came to be held in awe by the rulers and the ruled in and out of the Maratha State... Quite a new generation of honest and efficient officials, clerks, accountants, supervisors, revenue collectors, military suppliers, came to be reared up." Sir Richard Temple conveys much the same impression when he says: "His care extended to the fiscal, the judicial, and the general departments. All men in his day knew that the head of the State was personally master of the work, was the friend of the oppressed and the foe of the oppressor, and was choosing agents who would carry out his beneficent orders. His thoughtfulness and considerateness were untiring and were often shown in a signal or graceful manner." Our admiration increases when we remember that Madhavrao was but twenty-eight years of age when he died. Yet it is sad to learn that he too had a heavy load of debt to carry, amounting to some Rs. 24,00,000.

Nana Fadnavis who, perhaps, had no equal in the management of finance, still left no surplus balance in the Treasury. He was reputed to have concealed his enormous riches somewhere beyond the ken of his contemporaries, but the State could not satisfy its needs on this Barmicide Feast! Ranade writes: "The last Peshva had apparently no debts to pay, but was able to collect a large private treasure of his own." Nevertheless the State foundered on account of him. Indeed, as Palmer observed, with Nana Fadnavis, despite his faults, had departed "all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government".

7. Causes of Failure

It is tempting and easy to be severe in passing facile verdicts on people who have failed in history. The Marathas have had more than their legitimate share of criticism, for their real or imaginary blemishes and blunders, at the hands of historians with the peculiar advantage of being wise after the event. We shall not recount here all that has been said or written about them either from prejudice or from ignorance. The character of the political adventures of the Marathas has been described above. Their cultural contributions will be assessed in the next chapter. The broad fact remains that they failed to sustain their political supremacy or hold over the greater part of India. An analysis of the causes of that failure is an essential

part of our historical study. Modern India cannot afford to repeat the blunders committed by them.

We may dispose of the general causes before we examine the more specific ones. In the first place, monarchy and hereditary dynastic rule, like that of the Chhatrapatis and the Peshvas, was by its very nature and inherent defects not calculated to endure intact. The fate of the Imperial Mughals was, therefore, not to be missed by the Imperial Marathas. It is true that the times were not ripe for the creation of a non-hereditary head of the State; but it was a fatal blunder that led the Marathas to deviate from the wise policy of Shivaji who did not observe the principle of hereditary succession in the appointment of his officers. Secondly, as we have pointed out more than once, Shivaji had tried to defeudalise the State he was building to a considerable extent. From the time of Rajaram there was a revival of the *Saranjam* system out of which were to grow the several Maratha sub-states each pulling apart from the central authority and national interests. Thirdly, the very growth of the Maratha *Svarajya* into *Samrajya* involved a transformation that proved fatal to its continuation. As Mr. V. V. Joshi has rightly observed: "A people in order to establish a new civilisation must preach a new order. Their social, political, economic and spiritual life must have as its ideal and basis something new and progressive; something which they can give to others. The new order gives a moral and organisational superiority to a people and they prevail in a struggle against others, who have no philosophy and no ideals." Shivaji's *Svarajya* possessed all these qualities; that is why it succeeded. The Peshvas' *Samrajya* lacked all of them; hence its ultimate failure. The Maratha movement in the "royal period" was natural, national and dynamic; under the Peshvas it was artificial, unnatural, and static, i.e., uncreative, unconstructive and unnational. Shivaji mobilised the Marathas for the attainment of national independence and the protection and preservation of *Maharashtra Dharma*. The Peshvas aimed at Maratha aggrandisement at the expense of others like the Gujaratis, the Rajputs and the Jats, with the help of miscellaneous mercenaries including Pathans, Pindaris and Europeans. While Shivaji's efforts were concentrated on the building up of a positive Maratha Polity, the Peshvas were lured by ephemeral glory and power and the stream of gold flowing into Poona from the North and the South. Neither in ideas nor in the means with which they sought to realise them was there any originality among the Peshvas. Just as the decadent Mughal Empire was overthrown by the living force of the Marathas under Shivaji's

creative leadership during the seventeenth century, the decadent Maratha Empire was disintegrated by the positive forces for which the English stood from the close of the eighteenth century onwards.

Among the specific causes leading to the ultimate failure of the Marathas we can touch upon only the most salient ones. The greatest blunder committed by them was their northern adventure. To "strike at the trunk of the decaying tree" was no doubt a temptation, but the Marathas were ill-equipped for it. Bajirao had the dash of a soldier, but neither the patience of an administrator nor the vision of a statesman. Sripatrao Pratinidhi's failure, in the historic debate over the question of "consolidation *vs.* expansion" showed how rhetoric could triumph over reason, and political wisdom be worsted by vanity. It is puerile to suggest that, since the South was left to the junior branch of Kolhapur to exploit, there was nothing else for Shahu to do but to expand northwards. To close up the divisions at home was more essential than to strike for an Empire outside. To declare that the northern campaigns were intended to divert the turbulent elements within Maharashtra is to justify the criticism that the Maratha State was a predatory organisation of bandits. There were enemies nearer home, like the Nizam, the Siddis and the Europeans, that needed to be eliminated, but were foolishly suffered not only to remain but also to grow strong. The Panipat disaster and Raghoba's desertion to the English, together with its corollary, Bajirao's Treaty of Bassein, were the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. The ultimate survival of islands of Maratha power in Baroda, Gwalior and Indore, is hardly sufficient compensation for the retribution reaped at home: the wiping out of Poona and Satara. The betrayal of the national interests, by having recourse to the English, was not confined to Raghoba and his son Bajirao II; the Peshvas had already pointed the way by taking their assistance against the Angres.

The northern adventures might have been justified, if the conquerors had the desire and the capacity to organise their conquests on the lines of Shivaji's *Svarajya*: Akbar had launched upon a career of wide territorial expansion, but he vindicated his Imperialism by his equally great benevolence towards his subjects in all parts of his Empire. He created and left a rich and growing legacy to his successors. Napoleon at least enriched France by the loot he gathered from the rest of Europe. The Peshvas, for all their martial exploits, impoverished themselves and their victims. Financial bankruptcy was the ever-present skele-

ton in the Imperial cupboard which the Peshvas had not the capacity to exercise.

All Empire-builders have used the army as an instrument of State policy. Shivaji created a splendid military force and carved out a kingdom which became the foundation of Maratha pride and power. But his was a national militia with a splendid morale. The ambitions of the Peshvas led them into situations that blinded them to the secrets of Shivaji's success. As Mr. V. V. Joshi has forcibly put it, "Just as Bajirao symbolised the denationalisation of the Maratha State, Mahadji symbolised the denationalisation of the Maratha army." This need not necessarily have proved disastrous. The British built their Empire with the use of heterogeneous mercenaries. But where the Marathas failed was in their inability "to steal the thunder of their enemies". They continued to borrow artillery as well as artillery-experts from foreigners upto the last. They had not the qualities displayed by the Japanese later. We may broaden this criticism and apply it to all Indians. We have been too slow to profit from example and experience. The Marathas produced several generals who were experts in guerilla warfare, but not any worthy to be compared with the European generals they had to fight against. They were for ever at the mercy of de Boignes and Perrons. They never turned to the mastery of modern scientific warfare. On the contrary, they lapsed even from the sound principles of Shivaji. Not only did they abandon his guerilla tactics, for which the Marathas had a genius, but also relinquished his high moral principles. To take women during campaigns was a military crime punishable with death in the time of Shivaji. Under the Peshvas, it was a recognised fashion. The later Marathas could no more resist the weaknesses that flesh is heir to than the later Mughals; hence they went the way of all flesh equally with their prototypes.

Longevity is not all a boon from heaven: it is at least partly an index of physical stamina. The later Marathas led fast lives in every sense of the term. But whatever the cause, the brevity of the lives of their most prominent leaders was fatal to the cause they represented. All but the first and the last of the Peshvas met with a premature death. Hence the dictum of Grant Duff about Madhavrao I is applicable to the entire dynasty: 'their untimely demise was more fatal to the Maratha Empire than the holocaust of Panipat'. Another aspect of the misfortune of the Marathas was the series of deaths of important personalities that the last eleven years of the eighteenth century witnessed. The great judge Rama Shastri died in 1789;

Mahadji Shinde and Haripant Phadke in 1794; Ahilyabai Holkar and Peshva Madhavrao II in 1795; Tukoji Holkar in 1797; Parashuram Bhau Patwardhan in 1799; and lastly Nana Fadnavis in 1800. When these tall poppies were mown down by the hand of fate, only ignominious betrayers of Maratha independence like Bajirao II, Anandarao Gaikwad, Daulatrao Shinde, Yashvantrao Holkar, and Raghuji Bhonsle remained.

That lack of unity is the cause of political surrender is a truism oft repeated by historians who write the epitaph on fallen nations. The details of how Maratha independence was surrendered to the British will come in for appropriate consideration in the section where the rise of the British dominion is dealt with. In the present analysis we may refer to only one of the aspects of disunity on which some modern reformist writers have harped. Both Ranade and Sarkar have laid considerable emphasis on caste as having largely contributed to the disintegration of the Maratha power. This is one of the most misunderstood and misused terms in the vocabulary of the critics of things Indian. Caste certainly has much to answer for in the decline of Indian civilisation. In modern India few would mourn its total abolition. But to attribute the decline and fall of the Maratha Empire to caste antagonisms is, to put it mildly, unhistorical. Sardesai has subjected this criticism to a searching scrutiny, and, after examining the fortunes and careers of over 100 families, in the course of 150 years of Maratha history, has come to the conclusion that caste did not play, so far as the administration was concerned, any significant part. It is admitted by all that, under Shivaji, careers were open to talent absolutely. If the criticism has any point at all, it is supposed to apply to the rule of the Peshvas. It is well known that the Maratha (non-Brahman) generals who rose to eminence and became founders of principalities in the North, did so by the patronage of the first two Peshvas. Balaji Bajirao, the third Peshva, in a letter addressed to Shahu (quoted by Sardesai, in his *Main Currents*, p.180) states: "We, as Your Highness' ministers, know only this, that all castes, whether Deshasthas, Kakanasthas, Karhadas, Prabhus, Shenvis or Marathas, all belong equally to Your Highness as their father. Their service alone should be the measure of their worth, and not their caste." Madhavrao and his famous chief justice Rama Shastri were well known for their impartiality towards all classes of people. "It is worth noting," Sardesai points out, "that out of the 49 persons found guilty of the murder of Narayanrao (Peshva), 24 were Deccani Brahmans of the murdered Peshva's caste, 2 Saraswats, 3 Prabhus, 6 Mara-

thas, 1 Maratha maid-servant, 5 Mussalmans, and 8 North Indian Hindus." Even Ranade, who has so much inveighed against caste, admits: "As between caste and caste, the Peshvas held the balance evenly, even when the interests of the Brahmin priests were affected." He has cited several concrete instances in support of this observation (*Miscellaneous Writings*, pp. 378-9). In all their major engagements, in victory and in defeat, as at Kharda and Panipat, the Brahmans and the Marathas fought shoulder to shoulder and shed their blood in the interests of the Maratha power. When the period of intestinal feuds, rivalries and intrigues started, the commission of suicidal follies was not confined to any single caste. They were committed as often within the same caste as between castes. The demoralisation pervaded all sections. If modern social reformers want to point a moral at all, they should seek other illustrations. Nevertheless, as the English observed: 'It has always been allowed, and that too with just reason, that nothing can reduce the Maratha power but dissensions among themselves, and it is fortunate for the other Powers in Hindustan that the Maratha Chiefs are always ready to take every advantage of each other.' The British profited most by these dissensions.

NOTE: MINTS AND CURRENCIES

In the text we have often referred to the *hon.* e.g. in giving the salaries of the various officers in the Maratha army. This was a gold coin $3\frac{1}{2}$ *masas* in weight; 1 *masa* = $1/12$ *tola*. Each *hon* contained $2\frac{3}{4}$ *masas* and $\frac{1}{2}$ *gunja* of gold, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ *gunjas* of silver; 1 *masa* = 8 *gunjas*. Delhi gold and silver were regarded as the standard of purity. Besides the *hon*, there was another gold coin in circulation, viz., *mohur*. The Delhi (Aurangzeb) *mohur* = $14\frac{1}{2}$ rupees, and the Surti *mohur* = $15\frac{1}{2}$ rupees. The Maratha *mohur* approximated to these. The silver rupee = the English coin of the same denomination at Madras. The lowest coin was the copper pice (*paisa*) = 10 *masas* = $10/12$ *tola* of copper. There was a *dhabu* = 2 pice = 22 *masas*. Cowries were used to denote fractions of a pice. The most widely circulated pice was the *Shivarayi* which was introduced by Shivaji.

Mints were not the monopoly of the State. Coins were produced by the *sonars* or *savkars* (goldsmiths and bankers). They were consequently minted at several places and generally bore the marks of the producer and the place of origin. Some of them bore the seal of Shivaji, or that of Shahu, or of the Peshva, or of the local ruler (like Gaikwad, Holkar or Shinde). Maratha coins, like those of the early East India Company, down to 1835, often

carried the legend of the Mughal Emperor in Persian. All these coins were simultaneously in circulation, each finding its own level by the judgment of the dealers. About 1744 Balaji Bajirao tried to reorganise the mints and currencies by granting licenses to some persons with defined regulations and specifications. Revenue came to be assessed and collected, in terms of the standard *hon*, and salaries were also paid similarly. When the British inherited the legacy of the Peshvas, there were no fewer than 38 varieties of gold coin and 127 of silver in circulation in the Bombay Province alone.

The variety and the lack of standardisation were due to the laxity of government on the one side, and the difficulties of communications on the other. Territories, too, frequently changed masters. Ranade concludes his survey of 'Currencies and Mints under Maratha Rule' with the remark: "...the statement now generally made that India was too poor a country for the circulation of gold coins is unsupported by the facts of the case, as they can be ascertained from the history of the Mints under Maratha rule...there is apparently no reason why, if the gold coins were in demand a 100 years ago, there should not be a similar natural demand for these coins in our present condition of greatly extended commercial and banking activity."

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

MARATHA CONTRIBUTIONS

1. *Introduction.* 2. *Songs of the Saints.* 3. *Ballads of the Heroes.* 4. *Historical Literature.* 5. *Spirit of Independence.*

1. *Introduction*

MODERN INDIA is an edifice that has been built by many hands. In the earlier sections of this book we witnessed the contributions of the past down to the Mughals. Here we shall assess the legacy of the Marathas in the field of culture. After having surveyed the rich contributions of the Mughals in the realm of art and architecture, one naturally feels the paucity of these in the history of the Marathas. Although there are a few scattered specimens of their artistic ideas here and there in Maharashtra, it cannot be denied that they did not achieve anything distinctive or monumental in this line. This may not be explained away, as some Maratha apologists have tried to do, by saying that "they never had the leisure, the peace and the money that are necessary for such works." There was something rugged, pragmatic and calculating in the Maratha national character that left little room for the nicer graces of life. They had more of the Spartan than of the Athenian elements in their composition. Much is written of the grand palace supposed to have been erected by Bajirao in the Shanvarvada at Poona. But today, thanks to the vandalism of their enemies, only the plinth and the outer shell of the surrounding fortification have remained. The only surviving specimens of the Peshvai architecture in Poona are the temples of Parvati and the porch of the Vishram Bag palace, at present housing the municipal office. In the provincial capitals like Kolhapur, Baroda, Indore and Gwalior, of course, there is better, and even impressive evidence of the sense of art, but it cannot be claimed that all this is the distinctive creation of the Marathas. Apart from the Hemadpanthi style of temple-building, coming down from the thirteenth century, the Marathas produced nothing of note in the monumental art. Though Ajanta, Ellora, Karla, and Elephanta are within the Maratha territory, they are the creations of a civilisation totally different from the spirit and outlook of the makers of Maratha *Svarajya* and *Samrajya*, with which we are more directly concerned here. There is, however, enough to appreciate in the world of Maratha literature to compensate for other lacks.

2. Songs of the Saints

Marathi literature was originally inspired by religion and adopted poetry as its most natural medium. We shall not dwell on its history except in its bearing on the birth of modern Maharashtra which is still very much alive. The distinctive literary modes created by the Marathi writers were the *ovi* and the *abhang*. These facile meters, marked with rhymes, are capable of versatile treatment. The former is particularly suited for long compositions, and the latter for shorter religious lyrics and aphorisms. The vogue started with Dnaneshvar and Namdev, at the close of the thirteenth century and continued down, through Eknath, to Tukaram and Ramdas in the time of Shivaji. Other writers like Vaman and Moropant, in the eighteenth century, adopted other forms, particularly the *sloka* and *arya*, but the *motif* was still religious. It was only as the century advanced, and religion yielded place to secular interests, that poets like Raghunath Pundit turned to subjects like *Svayamvara* (the marriage of Nala and Damayanti). An *arya* declares:

The best *sloka* is Vaman's, the best *abhang* Tukaram's. The best *ovi* Mukteshvar's and the best *arya* Moropant's. Dnaneshvar wrote under the patronage of the Yadava rulers of Devgiri (Daulatabad), and Raghunath Pundit at Tanjore, the southernmost limit of Maratha power and influence. The *Dnaneshvari*, comprising over 9,000 *ovis*, is a commentary on the *Bhagvad Gita*, composed in the 13th century Marathi dialect (Prakrit), but still holds its sway on the mind of Maharashtra as well as outside. It has been translated into English. But the universal masters of the hearts of the common men and women even today, wherever Marathi is spoken or understood, are Namdev and Tukaram. A few verses composed by the former have been assimilated into the *Gur Granth Saheb* of the Sikhs. Of Tukaram's *gathas* or *abhangs*, Rev. MacNicol has remarked: "The popularity of his verses has continued undiminished until today, and they are so widely known among all classes of Marathas that many of them have almost come to have the vogue and authority of proverbs. They are more familiar throughout Maharashtra than are (or were) in Scotland 'the psalms of David or the songs of Burns'." The voice of the centuries is still heard in the streets, lanes and cottages of Maharashtra. Not only the *Varkari* (pilgrim) on his way to Pandharpur, the spiritual capital of Maharashtra, but the ordinary labourers and cart-men on their daily round may be still heard humming the verses of Tukaram. In like manner, little children are

taught to learn by rote the '*Manache sloka*' (self-advice to the mind) of Ramdas (*guru* of Shivaji), even as the adults imbibe the practical wisdom contained in his '*Dasa Bodha*'.

Among the works of the eighteenth century still read, re-read, and appreciated, are the compositions of Shridhar, *Rama-vijaya* (Triumph of Rama), *Hari-vijaya* (Triumph of Hari), *Pandava-pratapa* (Prowess of the Pandavas), and *Shivaleelamrita* (Nectar of Shiva's Sport), and as Acworth has aptly put it: "There is no Maratha poet who equals Sridhar in the acceptance he obtains from all classes. The Brahman may prefer Moropant, the Kunbi Tukaram, but each will put Sridhar next to him, and each will prefer Shridhar to the poet preferred by the other." Moropant dominated the eighteenth century by the spell of his poetry and as the culmination of the Pundit tradition. He composed over 100,000 lines of which *Kekavali* (Peacock's Cry) was perhaps the only long poem written by him with an eye to art essentially. Of the earlier writers in the *ovi* style, Eknath's commentary on the *Bhagavata* is still an unsurpassed classic; while Mahipati's *Bhakti-vijaya* (Triumph of Bhakti) enjoys a unique popularity among the simpler folk.

3. Ballads of the Heroes

Just as the Bhakti movement democratised religion in Maharashtra and leavened the whole society with universal devotion, as a precursor of the political upheaval, the composers of the *Povadas* or ballads, filled men and women, young and old, with a fervour for brave deeds and sacrifice for the national cause. This is a mode of poetic composition which is peculiar to Maharashtra, and its vogue has not died out even now. Though most of the *Povadas* which continue to inspire the masses sing of the valiant deeds of the heroes of Maratha history, like Shivaji's overthrow of Afzul Khan at Pratapgad and Tanaji's sacrifice at Simhagad, the ballad has been utilised to popularise generally events worthy of commemoration, in rough and ready but vigorous rhymes. The composers, known as *Shahirs*, are as popular as the religious writers noticed above. Though no longer confined to that class, the vogue started with the Gondhalis or followers of the cult of Amba Bhavani, the favourite deity of Shivaji. Today these songs are sung to the accompaniment of a single-string instrument, wherever people gather in numbers, and continue to thrill the listeners, in spite of their somewhat monotonous ring to the ears of strangers. It is impossible to convey in words the electric atmosphere the singing of the *Povadas* creates. They have now been imparted to gramophone records, and

broadcast on the radio, but they are most effective only when they have the proper human setting of the Gondhalis or Shahirs in the midst of a sensitive and responsive crowd. Here we must be contented with the last lines of Acworth's brilliant rendering of 'The Ballad of Tanaji Maloosre':

And ye, Marathas brave! give ear,
 Tanaji's exploits crowd to hear.
 Where from your whole dominion wide
 Shall such another be supplied?
 O'er seven and twenty castles high
 His sword did wave victoriously.
 The iron years are backward roll'd,
 His fame restores the age of gold;
 Whene'er this song ye sing and hear,
 Sins are forgiv'n, and heaven is near.

The *Lavni*, or romantic love lyric, is a popular twin with the heroic *Povada*. One of its great exponents was Ram Joshi who wrote at the close of the eighteenth and commencement of the nineteenth century. If the *Povada* was masculine in its robust vigour, the *Lavni* was feminine* in its tone and tenor. Its birth marked the decadence of Maratha power and society.

4. Historical Literature

Alberuni's animadversion on the lack of the historical sense of Indians is largely justified by the paucity of historical works properly so called in our country, coming down from ancient times. Materials from which history could be constructed is undoubtedly available in abundance; but very little of it shares the character of regular history. Even the *Rajatarangini*, which is about the only historical work that constitutes an exception to this observation, is a poetic account of the rulers of Kashmir, in which history is not a little vitiated by the art in which it is expressed. The bardic writers of Rajasthan are about the only other exception we know of. Historical works and chronicles came into vogue in India more and more with the advent of the Muslims. Among the natives of the soil, the Marathas made the largest contributions in this field. We shall cite here only a few outstanding examples.

To start no earlier than with the epoch of Shivaji, Paramahanda's *Shiva Bharata* is a work of unique interest and value. It is a contemporary poetical life of Shivaji, in Sanskrit, of great historical use in spite of its form. Another work, composed in Sanskrit, and bearing on an

* More precisely, *Sringara-rasa* is displayed in the *Lavni*, and *Vira-rasa* in the *Povada*.

important theme in Maratha history, is Jayarama's *Parnalaparvata-grahṇakhyānam*. But poetry can never be a convenient medium for the writing of history. Besides, the above compositions do not have for us the special importance that works in Marathi, the language of the Marathas, possess in our context. Apart from the vast materials contained in the official records of the Peshvas (in the form of letters, inventories, diaries, etc., which provide authentic sources of information for the historian) the Marathas wrote their annals in the form of *Bakhars*. Some of them are contemporary, like Sabhasad's, and others contemporary or near-contemporary, like Chitnis', Chitrugupta's, Peshva's *Bakhars* and so on. The *Jedhe-Shakavali* or chronology of the Jedhe family is another type of record which is of considerable historical use. Lastly, we might mention the *Adnapatra* and *Rajavyavahara-kosha*, two works of utmost value referred to earlier. The former, supposed to have been composed by Ramachandrapant Amatya for the instruction of Shivaji's successors, and the latter a dictionary of political terms (Sanskrit equivalents for Persian) compiled by Raghunatha Pundit (not to be confounded with his namesake from Tanjore belonging to the eighteenth century), by order of Shivaji. The *Adnapatra* possesses unique merit as embodying the political code of the Marathas, comparable to the *Kautiliya Artha-sastra* of Mauryan times.

Some modern writers have discredited the value of most of the Maratha *Bakhars* as historical works. While it is necessary to make discriminating use of them, like all other source-materials, to disparage them as a class could only be the result of incorrigible prejudice. As a corrective to such preconceived bias, we would quote the just appreciation of the *Bakhar* writers by Edward Scott Waring, the forerunner of Grant Duff. Contrasting the Maratha with the Persian chronicles, he writes: "Not so the Mahratta histories. Their historians, some will deny them the name—write in a plain, simple and unaffected style, content to relate passing events in apposite terms, without seeking turgid imagery or inflated phraseology. Excepting in the letter addressed to the Peshva, by the great Malharrao Holkar, no attempt is made to make the worse appear the better reason. Victory and defeat are briefly related; if they pass over the latter too hastily, they do not dwell upon the former with unnecessary minuteness. They do not endeavour to bias or mislead the judgment, but are certainly deficient in chronology and in historical reflections."

5. Spirit of Independence

Even virtues wrongly emphasised sometimes lead to undesirable consequences. It will not therefore be paradoxical to state that the Marathas fell because of their most impressive national characteristic, viz., their spirit of independence. This is writ large on the pages of their history: social, political and intellectual. The spirit of independence and national revolt represented by Shivaji is recognised by all. Under the Peshvas that spirit continued so long as the leadership was patriotic. With Raghoba began the decline in this respect which led to the fatal surrender of Bajirao II. The last of the great stalwarts who stoutly stood out for Maratha independence was Nana Fadnavis. After him came the deluge. Even then the Maratha chiefs did not yield to the British without a fight, though it was certain that it was a losing struggle. In internal organisation, Shivaji had initially to borrow from existing models; but he strove progressively to introduce innovations that indicated his spirit of independence in a deeper sense. He did not want to be a mere imitator. In warfare, too, the Maratha system was not slavishly borrowed, but original. The Marathas failed when they gave up this tradition and depended on foreigners for arms as well as leadership.

In the social and intellectual spheres, the spirit of independence of the Marathas has not been so well appreciated as in the political. Nonetheless it was as real and not less important. Dnanesvar and Eknath, as we have pointed out before, were social heretics who shocked their orthodox contemporaries by their revolt against existing conventions. In an age of sacerdotalism they struck out boldly on the path of religious, social, as well as literary reform. The way in which the Maratha saints, hailing from all sections of the society, including among them Mahars, Kunbis, tailors, gardeners, maidservants, etc., stood up to persecution at the hands of social reactionaries, demonstrated that the spirit of independence among the Marathas was not confined to the exceptional few. It is also to be remembered that this Democracy of the Devotees was rendered possible by the bold adoption of the spoken language of the masses as the medium of expression by the exponents of the new cult, right from the time of the Mahanubhavas and Dnanesvar. In times such as ours, when the vernaculars have themselves attained to a high literary status, it is not easy to realise how contemptuously they were treated in the days of the domination of Sanskrit pundits. We may find a faint parallel to it in the prestige enjoyed by English in the realm of higher learning even now, and the battles the

advocates of the mother-tongue had (and still have) to wage for a place among the respectables. "If Sanskrit is derived from the gods," asked Eknath with some vehemence, "was the mother-tongue born of thieves?" Such was the linguistic independence asserted by the earliest makers of Marathi literature. As Shridhar argued with telling effect: "Though the pundits praise Sanskrit to the skies, they are obliged to expound it in the popular vernacular."

In the heyday of Maratha *Svarajya* as well as *Samrajya*, this spirit of innovation, adventure, and independence, was a constructive and creative force. In the days of their decline, which indeed was hastened by excess, Maratha manliness overreached itself. It led to insubordination, indiscipline and recalcitrance of all types. Individualism and particularism grew by insidious stages until at last they led to national disintegration and social and political disruption. Even today, the defects of their virtues are not conspicuous by their absence among the descendants of the builders of Maharashtra's greatness in the past. History, indeed, has its warnings as well as inspirations.

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PART THREE

BRITISH SUPREMACY

CHAPTER TWELVE

EUROPE COMES TO INDIA

1. *Portuguese Pioneers.* 2. *The Dutch Challenge.* 3. *English and French Beginnings.* 4. *Indian Reactions.* 5. *The Anglo-French Contest.*

1. *Portuguese Pioneers*

IN the Introduction we spoke of the advent of the Europeans in India towards the close of the fifteenth century. The Portuguese were the pioneers, not only in the discovery of the Cape route to the Orient, but also in the establishment of European power in the East. Although the Dutch, the French and the English, who followed in their wake, outdistanced them in trade, colonisation and politics, it cannot be gainsaid that it was the Portuguese who pointed the way to their rivals in all these activities. We are not directly concerned here with their doings in the wider arena of Asia as a whole. It suffices for our purpose to note, in some detail, their achievements and failures on the mainland of India.

It is necessary to recollect that (i) our trade with Europe was both rich and ancient, and it did not start with the coming of the Portuguese *via* the Cape of Good Hope; (ii) the diversion of the trade-routes was the outcome of the Crusades or religious wars between the followers of the Cross and the Crescent, and consequently Portuguese enterprise in India too was marked by religious bigotry, particularly against the Muslims. In contrast to this, the Hindus and Muslims acted in unison in meeting the new menace to the commerce and religions of India. There were no doubt rivalries and antagonisms between the numerous rajas and sultans in this country; but they were due more to the medieval conditions than to religious differences. Though the Hindu Raja of Cochin provided shelter for the Portuguese intruders, the Zamorin of Calicut carried on a perpetual struggle against the dangerous Europeans, with the help of the local Muslims as well as of the Sultans of Gujarat and Turkey. Their ultimate failure in this longdrawn struggle was due, not to the religious conflicts between the Hindus and Muslims, but to the lack of political harmony among the petty rulers of the west coast, and the naval superiority of the Europeans. We shall study the specific reactions of Indians to the

total impact of the Europeans, in a later section of this chapter. Broadly, the Portuguese strategy was oceanic, while the fleets that opposed them were built mostly for coastal service. In the long run, therefore, the Portuguese triumphed, and secured permanent footholds on our shores. They have continued to occupy to this day Goa, Daman and Diu, which were acquired during the earlier decades of the sixteenth century.

Briefly, ever since Pope Alexander VI assigned to the Portuguese the hemisphere east of the Azores, and particularly since their entry into the Indian Ocean, they had arrogated to themselves the monopoly of ocean control, declaring in the words of their contemporary historian Barros: "It is true that there does exist a common right to all to navigate the sea and in Europe we recognise the rights which others hold against us; but this right does not extend beyond Europe and, therefore, the Portuguese as Lords of the Sea are justified in confiscating the goods of all those who navigate the sea without their permission." These high claims were bound to be challenged by other maritime nations, as indeed happened not very long after. We shall deal with that challenge a little later. Meanwhile we must take note of the immediate results of the Portuguese activities in our part of the world.

On the strength of the preliminary achievements of the early Portuguese adventurers, their King assumed the high-sounding title of "Lord of the navigation, conquest and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India." When the policy of steady penetration and consolidation was decided upon, the first Viceroy to be appointed was Francesco d'Almeida. "As long as you may be powerful at sea," he declared, "you will hold India as yours; and if you do not possess this power, little will avail you a fortress on shore." Nevertheless, his greater successor, Albuquerque, the greatest of the Portuguese Viceroys, believed in and demonstrated the more comprehensive strategy of acquiring and holding a few vital bases on the shore, as well as maintaining supremacy on the seas. In fact the former was essential to the latter, though history revealed that further progress could not be made without the mastery of the oceans.

The Portuguese, before the time of Albuquerque, had their bases, on the west coast, at Cochin and Cannanore. But owing to the determined hostility of the Zamorin of Calicut, they felt the need for a safer site. Albuquerque discovered this in Goa with its natural advantages and central location, between the territories of the Sultan of Gujarat in the North, and the Zamorin in the South. The

first attempt to take Goa from the Sultan of Bijapur was made early in 1510, but the place could not be secured until the end of that year. With Goa as the pivot of operations, Albuquerque next attempted to convert the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean into a Portuguese lake. The east coast of Africa, up to the island of Socotra at the entrance of the Red Sea was already under Portuguese control. In the course of the next five years (1511-15), Albuquerque succeeded in occupying Ormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and Malacca at the tip of the Malay Peninsula. The fortification of these strategic points sealed off the eastern seas and brought them under Portuguese control. That position of vantage was held by the Portuguese for well nigh a century, after which their naval superiority was overthrown by their rivals: the Dutch, the French and the English.

We need not follow the entire course of Portuguese history in India under all their Viceroy's. For our purpose the study of the character of their rule and its results are more important than the narrative of their ephemeral conquests. In the course of time, they came to establish factories all along the Indian sea-board from Diu (off the Kathiawar coast) to Hugli in Bengal. Among the important places held by them at some time or other, were Surat, Daman, Bassein and Salsette, Bombay, Chaul, Dabhol, Goa, Cannanore, Calicut, Cochin, Quilon, Colombo, Negapatam, San Thome (Madras), Masulipatam, Hugli, etc. They did not penetrate far into the interior, as did the English later, but they carried on commercial and missionary activities in the Vijayanagar and Mughal Empires. The greatest of the Viceroy's of the King of Portugal, after Albuquerque, were Nuno da Cunha and Joao de Castro. In 1518, under Albuquerque's immediate successor Lopo Soares, Colombo was fortified and Chittagong reached. Ceylon subsequently developed into "one of the most wealthy and important possessions of the Portuguese in the East." In Bengal the Portuguese "remained to the end adventurers and merchants, and were never a ruling power." We have before referred to their piratical activities in that region, and their ruthless suppression in the time of Shah Jahan. Their main seat of power, however, was always Goa. Diu was the most important conquest of da Cunha, though it had to be further secured by the victory of de Castro over the forces of Sultan Muhammad III of Gujarat. This is characterised by Morse Stephens (Albuquerque's biographer) as "the last great achievement of the Portuguese arms in Asia." (1548).

In a total reckoning of the achievements and failures of the Portuguese in India, Affonso d'Albuquerque will always occupy the most prominent place. "His system rested on four main bases. He desired to conquer certain important points for trading purposes, and to rule them directly; he desired to colonise the selected districts by encouraging mixed marriages with the native inhabitants; where he could not conquer or colonise he desired to build fortresses; and where this was impracticable he desired to induce the native monarchs to recognise the supremacy of the King of Portugal and to pay him tribute." Of all these "bases", Albuquerque's policy of colonisation was unique in the history of European contacts with India. This had far-reaching results, and it profoundly affected the fortunes of the Portuguese in India.

Goa was not merely conquered but also colonised by the Portuguese. For this purpose marriages between the European settlers and the natives were greatly encouraged. No fewer than 450 Portuguese married Indian women before Albuquerque left for Malacca. These were mostly widows of the Muhammadans killed in war. In the words of Albuquerque's *Commentaries*: "He divided among the married ones the lands, houses, and cattle and everything else that there was, to give them a start in life; and if the women whom he thus gave in marriage asked for the houses which had been in possession of their fathers or their husbands, he ordered that these should be so given, and therein they found many jewels and gold pieces which had been hidden underground and abandoned when the city was conquered." This policy of social (racial) admixture, however, proved unwise in the long run, and was not copied by the other Europeans who came after them. It resulted in utter demoralisation of the halfcastes.

Albuquerque, on the other hand, showed great statesmanship in the way he established the administration in Goa. He employed Indians in all offices, civil as well as military. Timoja and Malharrao were the most distinguished among them. *Thanadars*, *peons*, and soldiers were freely enrolled from among the natives, though he showed a partiality in favour of the Hindus as against the Muslims in the highest appointments. 800 natives of Kanara and Malabar were engaged in Albuquerque's Red Sea expedition. The natives who served in the second capture of Goa were commanded by Malharrao. Schools were established in Goa for the education of the inhabitants along western lines. European supervisors were appointed over departments of administration largely manned by the natives. The revenue was collected on the basis of existing records

and standards, but the policy was to make the administration self-supporting. Profits were sought mostly from the trade in pepper and ginger from Malabar, and spices from Ceylon and Malacca. The coinage introduced bore the Portuguese stamp, but the denominations were those which were already current in India. To economise the importation of gold and silver from Portugal, barter in European goods was encouraged. "The union of revenue and judicial functions, which is one of the principal features of the English administration of India, was adopted by Albuquerque in his settlement of Goa". He also carefully maintained the constitution of the village communities. Shortly after his death, in 1526, a treatise called the *Foral de Usos e Costumes*, containing a record of the local customs and usages was published as a guide for the Portuguese administrators. Albuquerque's most enlightened act was the prohibition of *sati* in Goa. According to the *Commentaries*: "Although to change one's customs is equal to death itself, nevertheless they were happy to save their lives, and spoke very highly of him because he had ordered that there should be no more burning."

Among the inland activities of the Portuguese their missionary zeal was the most noteworthy. It has left its permanent marks in Goa as well as elsewhere in India. Although Syrian Christians had established themselves in Travancore and Malabar even prior to the advent of the Portuguese, the latter were the most zealous instruments of the propagation of Christianity in this country. In this matter their policy provoked the greatest opposition from the native inhabitants, and resulted in cruel persecutions with fatal consequences. This was certainly not the least important among the causes that led to the ultimate failure of the Portuguese in India. Modern missionary writers have laboured to exculpate the Portuguese from the charge of religious persecution (e.g., Rev. H. Heras, S.J., in his *The Decay of the Portuguese Power in India*), but the attempt is both naive and feeble. The evidence cited has rather served to confirm the charge than to refute it. Among the citations is the following:

To John de Castro Viceroy of India (from King John IV of Portugal), all Happiness: You knowing what an abominable thing Idolatry is in our Eyes, the same shall for the future not be tolerated in my Dominions. Being informed that in the Country about Goa the Pagan Temples are suffered and frequented both public and private, as well as divers sorts of Pagan Diversions, we command you once for all to have the same demolished, burnt and rooted out; and that all imaginable care be

taken to prevent the importation of Idols, either of Wood, Metal, Earth or any other matter....

This reads very much like one of the *firmans* of Aurangzeb, cited earlier in this book. The reactions were identical. Special privileges were conferred upon the converts and special disabilities imposed upon unwilling dissenters. We need not dwell on this controversial issue any longer.

Several important Missions were led to the Court of Akbar by Jesuit Fathers. They had their (Indian) headquarters in Goa, though not all of them were Portuguese nationals. There were among them Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, and even Englishmen like Fr. Stevens apart from the Portuguese. It will not be out of place here to make a few observations about these Missions. Fuller accounts are to be found in the books suggested at the end of this chapter.

The most famous of the Jesuit Fathers to come out to India was Francis Xavier, since canonised. He was one of the original disciples of St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. He died at Goa, and his body was embalmed. Thousands of Christians flock to Goa to this day, on pilgrimage from all parts of the world, to have a glimpse of his holy remains, which are periodically exhibited. From the point of view of scholarship, Fr. Stevens made himself memorable by composing the *Christa Purana* in Konkani (of which he also wrote the first grammar) which is a unique performance running into thousands of verses. Akbar was attracted towards the Jesuits by his eclecticism in religion. The most important members of the first Jesuit Mission to his Court were Fathers Aquaviva and Moserrate. "This Mission," observes Sir Edward Mac-lagan, "came to Akbar's Court at a time (28th February 1580) of great interest in the development of his religious policy, and its doings have received notice at the hands of the contemporary historians, Badauni and Abul Fazl; the former writing from the orthodox Muslim standpoint and the latter from Akbar's own eclecticism. We have also first-hand information recorded by the members of the Mission themselves". Since Monserrate accompanied Akbar in some of his expeditions, his writings are of use to historians, from more than a religious point of view. But successive Missions of the Christian *padres* failed to achieve the intended result of converting the people of India wholesale, beginning with their Emperor. For Akbar's interest in Christianity was that of an eclectic student of comparative religion, and not that of a proselytising missionary; and in India the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* did not obtain. Besides, the missionaries themselves approached the Emperor from

mixed motives—"working sometimes for the conversion of the Emperors, and sometimes for the material advancement of the Portuguese" (Maclagan).

Among the causes that led to the downfall of the Portuguese power in India, the following are admitted by most historians: (1) The destruction of the city and Empire of Vijayanagar in 1565 cut the tap-root of Portuguese commercial prosperity; (2) the absorption of Portugal by her more powerful neighbour in Europe, viz., Spain (1580), weakened the Portuguese dependency in India; (3) the challenge from other European nations like the Dutch, the French and the English destroyed Iberian supremacy over the seas; (4) the opposition of native powers like the Mughal Empire, Bijapur, the Nayaks of Ikkeri, and the Marathas exposed them to perpetual dangers from outside; and (5) bad government, marked by increasing corruption, inefficiency and religious intolerance undermined them internally. Fr. Roberto de Nobili wrote as early as 1605, from Ccchin: "With the exception of a few towns owned by the Portuguese, and a few stretches on both coasts depending on them, where they had minor settlements, in all that immense land of India, the power of the King of Portugal never possessed any sort of influence."

2. *The Dutch Challenge*

The Dutch were the first among European nations to challenge the monopoly of the Portuguese and the Spaniards. They were long under the Hapsburg rulers of Spain and had suffered under their political and religious tyranny. Just as they had earlier cut their dykes and flooded their own country to drive away their Spanish masters, now they decided to cut the "dykes of Portuguese and Spanish monopoly" and "flood the Netherlands with the wealth of the Orient". The Dutch being Protestants would not respect the invidious award of Pope Alexander VI, which conferred the monopoly of world exploitation on the two Catholic nations of the Iberian peninsula. With the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the English Channel, in 1588, may be dated the overthrow of the naval supremacy of the Iberians, at first by the English and the Dutch, and then by the French. Finally a contest with the latter culminated in the emergence of the English as masters of the oceans and of world dominion.

In 1580 Portugal was absorbed by Spain, and the Spanish domination over that country continued until 1640. We have noted above how this affected the fortunes of the Portuguese adversely in India. The principal interests of the Spaniards lay in the New World, particularly South

America. They established themselves in the Philippines in the Far East *via* the Far West. The region between the Azores and the East Indies, which had been the monopoly of the Portuguese, was thus exposed to the new challenge from the Dutch, the English, and the French. The weaknesses of the Portuguese in India were particularly brought home to the Dutch by the writings of Linschoten, one of their countrymen, who had spent six years in Goa, as Secretary to the Portuguese Archbishop there. They rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1595 under their admiral Houtman, who, however, made straight for Java where conditions appeared more favourable for an attack on the Portuguese monopoly. This proved a correct calculation from the point of view of immediate advantages, but in the long run it left India free for exploitation by their English rivals. The greatest service rendered by the Dutch to the English was (i) by their destruction of the Portuguese power in the East, and (ii) the 'massacre of Amboyna' (1623), involving the murder of 10 Englishmen and the torture of several others, which made the future masters of India fall back into the field marked out for them by destiny. Meanwhile the Dutch had already fought a decisive naval battle against the Portuguese in the Straits of Malacca, in 1606, although they could not establish themselves at Malacca itself until 1641. Before this they had built fifteen fortresses on the various islands of the Archipelago and had pushed on as far as Japan. Linschoten had foreseen the importance of Java for the Dutch, and factories were established at Bantam and Jacatra. The latter place provided the foundation for the new settlement of Batavia which became the capital of the Dutch Empire in the East. But our chief interest lies in the doings of the Dutch in India.

After a few individual enterprises, the united *Oost Indische Compagnie* was formed under the auspices of the States-General of Holland, in 1602. It was authorised not only to carry on trade, but also to build forts, form offensive and defensive alliances with native princes and powers, and to make war or peace generally with the object of overthrowing the Portuguese supremacy in the East. Their first attempts, on the west coast of India, failed, except at Calicut, owing to the strongly entrenched position of the Portuguese. In the Zamorin, however, the Dutch admiral Steven Van der Hagen found a friend, and he was able to conclude a treaty of alliance with him against their common enemy the Portuguese (11th November 1604). Yet the main centres of Dutch enterprise in India were established on the east coast and in Ceylon. On the Coromandel

coast their principal factories or settlements were at Masulipatam, Petapoli, Pulicat and Tegnapatam (Tirupapuliyur). The Portuguese had their strongholds in San Thome and Negapatam. Here the Dutch found a friendlier reception at the hands of the Indian rulers than did the Portuguese. Consequently they were able to ply a more profitable trade than anywhere else in India. Pulicat, in the jurisdiction of the chief of Vellore, appeared to be more advantageous than Masulipatam which was subject to the ruler of Golkonda. The governors of the latter place were more exacting and slippery in their engagements than the Vellore authorities. Hence the Dutch were able to fortify Pulicat more strongly and made it the headquarters of their Governor in India. All other settlements were placed under his jurisdiction, subject to the overriding control of Batavia. When Ceylon was occupied by the Dutch, with the help of its native ruler, Raja Simha, they were able to turn the tables completely against the Portuguese. It became a convenient midway base between the Cape Town settlement in South Africa and Java. No fewer than 170 places were occupied by the Dutch during their long contact with Ceylon and India, covering a period of nearly as many years. These included Surat, Calicut and Cochin on the west coast; Kandy, Colombo, Jaffnapatam and Trincomali in Ceylon; Chinsura and Patna in Bengal and Bihar; besides the Coromandel factories already named. Geldria (Pulicat) was their best stronghold before the seat of Government was shifted (in 1689) to Negapatam, farther south, which had been taken from the Portuguese thirty years earlier.

The principal articles in which the Dutch traded were spices, cloves, nutmeg, mace, pepper and ginger. These were to be had in abundance in the Archipelago with supplementary supplies from Ceylon and the Malabar coast. To these were also added camphor, sandalwood, precious stones, indigo and Indian textiles which were exchanged for foreign silks, velvets, porcelainware, etc. Ordinarily traders had to pay import and export duties varying from 2 to 4 per cent. at the ports. But the Dutch, owing to the goodwill they earned among the princes, enjoyed large concessions. When the Raja of Vellore permitted them to build a factory at Pulicat, on 26th May 1610, they wrote to the King of Ceylon: "This king has made an eternal treaty with our prince, Mauritius de Nassau, whereby the king allowed and granted us free trade in all his territories and to live in them." An important and oft-repeated clause in most of their treaties with the Indian rulers was about religious toleration and neutrality: "Nobody on either side shall be allowed to raise any question, argument or dispute

about religion." This was a very wise policy in view of the contrary practice and experience of their Portuguese rivals. Another lesson they learnt from the results of the Portuguese colonisation was to discourage intermarriage with the natives: at any rate they did not adopt the deliberate policy of Albuquerque and so avoided breeding a vast halfcaste population. They were attracted to the mainland of India mainly by requirements of trade. Here they could purchase varieties of textile piece-goods cheap, with which to pay for the costly spices farther east. To secure these advantages, they went to any length in fighting the Portuguese—intrigue as well as aggressive warfare. It was only with the increasing competition of the English that Dutch interests in India suffered.

Sir Thomas Roe tried to excite the Great Moghul against the Dutch (1616). The capture of Golkonda by Aurangzeb also affected the Dutch interests on the east coast adversely. "The profits of the Coromandel Government, which in the years 1684 and 1685 appeared in the Company's books as exceeding 1,200,000 guilders, fell to 445,000 guilders in 1686 and 82,000 in 1687." On the other hand, they received rich compensation from Aurangzeb for the loss suffered by them during Shivaji's raid on Surat in 1664: "so that this catastrophe has brought us profit!" wrote the Dutch Governor to the authorities at home.

Although sometimes some of the Dutch factors proved unruly in their conduct, their settlements were generally well organised, and served as models for the English later on. Their factories were more or less fortified places, with houses for the Dutch as well as their Indian servants, warehouses for their merchandise, and barracks for soldiers and sailors. 'The factors in the Company's service were called merchants, and their ranks were assistant, junior merchant, merchant, and senior merchant. This nomenclature was preserved even in possessions where the duties of the Company's servants were not primarily commercial, but administrative, as in Ceylon. At the head of a factory there were as a rule two chiefs, the first and the second chief, who might be junior merchant, merchant, or senior merchant in rank.' Instructions issued by the Governors in 1649 and 1663 indicate that 'the first chief presides over the council, on which the other factors also sat; he had the general supervision over the factory's affairs, kept the money, negotiated with native traders, contracting for textiles, etc., and corresponding with the central administration, with the director or governor, as the case might be, but consulting his *secundo*. The second himself kept the trading accounts and looked after the warehouses.' It was

laid down that the senior merchant should hide nothing from the junior merchants, on pain of the utmost displeasure of the directors. He was not to buy or sell goods without a resolution of the Council.

The Dutch were finally ousted from India and Ceylon completely by the English as late as 1825. Apart from their overthrow of the Portuguese, which paved the way for the English in India, they deserve to be remembered for the light they throw on the conditions in India during the long period of their intercourse. The accounts of India and the East contained in the *Itinerario* and *Reysgeschrift* of Linschoten were published on the eve of the Dutch entry into India. Daniel Havart wrote vivid descriptions of the Dutch factories on the Coromandel coast about the time that their headquarters were shifted from Pulicat to Negapatam (1689). Slightly earlier, an account of Ceylon and Malabar was published by Philippus Baldaeus in 1672. Of greater value to the historian is the encyclopaedic work of Francois Valentyn, published between 1724 and 1726. Among their most scholarly writers was Abraham Rogerius who was at Pulicat from 1631 to 1641. His *Gentilismus Reseratus* was described by A. C. Burnell, in 1898, as "still, perhaps, the most complete account of South Indian Hinduism, though by far the earliest." Another work, of interest to botanists, was produced by Johannes Cassearius about 1678, entitled *Hortus Malabaricus*. The Dutch letters contained in the Dag Registers throw much light on the period of Shahji and Shivaji. By far the most interesting episode staged by a Dutch official of which we have record was the overland journey of Van Ravesteyn on horseback, across the peninsula, from Masulipatam to Surat, in 1615. He started from Masulipatam on the 8th May and reached Surat after 42 days. The return journey, *via* Burhanpur, took 56 days, owing to the circuitous route followed on account of war in the Deccan, arriving back in Masulipatam on 9th February 1616. This long and hazardous enterprise was undertaken for the recovery of the property of Van Deynson who had committed suicide at Surat, about 1608. Out of goods originally worth 12,000-13,000 guilders, Van Ravesteyn was able to recover 16 firelocks, 17 pistols, 6 pieces of lamlet, 75 ells of velvet, 18 bottles, 8lbs. sea-horse teeth, 30 packs of indigo, 600 pieces of corneban stone, some clothing eaten by white-ants, and 3,275 Mahmudis in cash.

3. English and French Beginnings

"Dutch power in India," P. E. Roberts has remarked, "was largely jeopardised on European battlefields." The Dutch

example of challenging their predecessors was too well copied by their European rivals—particularly the French and the English. It is also necessary to note that several other European countries participated in the early scramble for the riches of India and the Orient. Like the Dutch, the English and the French, they founded 'East India Companies' which, however, proved abortive. For example, as early as 1616, the Danes started a Danish East India Company, and established factories at Tranquebar in 1620, and Serampore in 1755, but they were obliged to sell them to the British in 1845, for Rs. 12,50,000. The Ostend Company was similarly started by Flemish merchants under the patronage of the Emperor of Austria, in 1723. Its chief settlement in India was at Bankibazar, on the Hugli, three miles north of Barrackpore. A Swedish company was floated in 1731. But the wind was taken out of their sails by the English and the French whose duel for supremacy in India is described in the next section of this chapter. Meanwhile it will be useful to have a few glimpses of their early beginnings.

The English preceded their French rivals in the establishment of their East India Company, though the French had arrived in India much earlier. 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies', as is well known, received their charter from Queen Elizabeth on the last day of 1600; whereas the French Company (*La Compagnie des Indes*) was not established until 1664. Perhaps the first Englishman to land in India (1579) was the Jesuit Father from Oxford, Thomas Stevens (Stephens) who lived for forty years in Goa and wrote the first Konkani grammar, besides the *Christa Purana*, a book of verses (in Konkani) containing 11,000 strophes of great literary merit. He was followed, some four years later, by a batch of Englishmen led by John Newbury, a merchant of London. They included William Leedes (jeweller), James Story (painter), and Ralph Fitch (merchant). At Goa they were imprisoned as heretics by the Portuguese, but obtained release on bail by the good offices of Fr. Stevens. James Story alone was welcomed by the Jesuits for the painting of their chapels. He married and settled down in Goa and never thought of returning home. The others escaped secretly and ultimately reached Agra after roving about in the Deccan, Malwa, and Rajputana. Among other places, they visited Belgaum, Bijapur, Golkonda, Masulipatam, Burhanpur, and Mandu, "passing many rivers which by reason of the rain were so swollen that we waded and swam often times for our lives." Of the entire com-

pany, Fitch alone returned to England, in 1591. The rest were never heard of again.

It is tempting to quote from Fitch's record of his impressions of the Imperial cities of the Mughals: "Agra and Fatepore (Fatehpur-Sikri) are two very great cities," he writes, "either of them much greater than London and very populous.* ... Hither is great resort of merchants from Persia and out of India, and very much merchandise of silke cloth, and of precious stones, both Rubies, Diamonds and Pearles." The last Englishman to visit the Court of Akbar was John Mildenhall or Midnall. He came with a letter from Queen Elizabeth asking for trade concessions or privileges such as were then enjoyed by the Portuguese. Mildenhall left London on 12th February 1599, and reached Lahore early in 1603, by the land route *via* Kandahar. He brought with him 29 good horses, each worth £50-60, for the Mughal Emperor. Though he was well received by Akbar, he had to encounter much opposition from the Portuguese who denounced Englishmen as "thieves and spies". Nonetheless Mildenhall succeeded in obtaining a *firman* from Akbar in 1605.

The *Hector* was the first English vessel to anchor at Surat. She reached there in August 1608 and brought with her the "bluff sea-captain" Hawkins who knew both Turki and Persian and needed no interpreter between himself and the Emperor Jahangir. Despite the close access he got to Jahangir, however, he too had to encounter the sinister opposition of the Jesuits. He bitterly complained: "The Jesuits here do little regard their masses and their church matters for studying how to overthrow my affairs." When one of his companions died at Agra, they would not allow him to be buried in the Christian cemetery. When Hawkins decided to marry an Armenian Christian lady, "to avoid being poisoned", they would not perform the wedding ceremony, unless he acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope. Consequently Hawkins left India in sheer disgust, in 1611.

We may pass over the next two English visitors, Paul Canning and William Edwards, who came to Jahangir with letters from King James (1612-15), like Hawkins, and dwell more on Sir Thomas Roe as the accredited ambassador of the English King. Before his time (Roe arrived at Surat on 18th September 1615, and left India on 17th February 1619), the English were "in deep disgrace with the king

* The population of London in 1580 was 123,034 and 152,478 between 1593-5. The population of Fatehpur-Sikri, according to V. A. Smith, may have been 200,000 in 1585.

and people", owing to the constant hostility of the Portuguese and the Jesuits, and "suffered blows of the porters, base peons, and thrust out by them with much scorn by head and shoulders, without seeking satisfaction." In the circumstances, the East India Company's agents were obliged to cringe and "kowtow" to the Imperial dignitaries. Sir Thomas was cast in a different mould: "of a pregnant understanding, well spoken, learned, industrious, and of comely personage", as the Directors of the East India Co. described him. In the words of V. A. Smith: he was "a gentleman of good education, a polished courtier, and trained diplomatist, well qualified for the task assigned to him, which was the negotiation of a treaty giving security to English trade." He was accompanied by an accomplished chaplain named Terry who wrote a very good account of the India he witnessed. Yet Roe's mission proved no more successful than that of his predecessors, though he was dismissed "with more favour and outward grace... than ever was shown to any ambassador, either of the Turk or Persian or other whatsoever." Jahangir assured him that the English would get the same privileges as were extended to other foreigners and no more. The English ambassador's experiences made him advise the East India Company as follows:

War and trafique are incompatible. By my consent, you shall no way engage yourselves but at sea, where you are like to gayne as often as to loose. It is the beggaring of the Portugale, notwithstanding his many rich residences and territoryes, that he keepees soldiers that spends it; yet his garrisons are meane. He never profited by the Indyees since he defended them. Observe this well. It hath been also the error of the Dutch, who seek plantation here by the sword. They have a wonderful stocke, they proule in all Places, they Posses some of the best; yet ther dead Payes Consume all the gayne. Lett this be received as a rule that if you will Profit, seek it at Sea, and in quiett trade; for without controversy it is an error to affect garrisons and land warrs in India.

However, if this advice had been meticulously followed by his countrymen, there would have been no British Empire in this country. Between 1612 when Thomas Best defeated a Portuguese squadron off Surat and 1622, when the British captured Ormuz, the English were steadily gaining ground against their rivals. The value of Swally Road and Surat was first stressed by Mildenhall and Hawkins. Until the headquarters of the Company on the western side were shifted to Bombay in 1687, Surat was the most important seat of English authority in India. Even

the remotely situated factories of Ajmer, Agra and Patna (1620) were under its supervision. Bengal was not separated as a Presidency until 1681.

The 'massacre' of Amboyna, in February 1623, was a real turning point in the fortunes of the English in the East. Driven from the Spice Islands by the Dutch, they concentrated on India. Up to 1610, the total number of English vessels in the East was no larger than 17, as against 134 of the Dutch. But with the establishment of their settlements at Masulipatam (1611) and Madras (1639) on the Coromandel coast, Surat (1613) and Bombay 1668) on the west coast, and Sutanati, Govindpur and Calcutta (1690) in Bengal, the English were unconsciously paving the way for their future Empire in this country. It is interesting to note that Bombay was got on a lease of £10 per annum (from Charles II of England), Madras for 1,200 *pagodas* (from the Raja of Chandragiri) and Calcutta for Rs. 1,200 annually (from the Nawab of Bengal). As indemnity for the 'massacre' of Amboyna, Cromwell exacted £85,000 from the Dutch, in addition to £3,615 paid to the heirs of the victims. But the most precious compensation received by the English, on account of what appeared at the moment a great calamity, was the fruitful field they found in this country. This inspired Sir Josiah Child, Director of the Company, in 1687, to dream of "the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come."

Indian reactions to the adventures of the Europeans will be dealt with in the next section. Here we might cursorily note the advantages the English derived from their relations with the Portuguese and the Dutch who were their more immediate rivals. Before the 'massacre' of Amboyna (1623) the Dutch and the English acted in concert, as Protestants fighting against the Catholic Portuguese. After that, despite their earlier antagonisms, the English cultivated friendly relations with the Portuguese in order to fight the Dutch. At Masulipatam they had established an agency in 1611, side by side with the Dutch; even then they acquired trade concessions from the ruler of Golkonda, by which they successfully competed with their Protestant rivals. In 1635 they signed a Convention with the Portuguese at Goa, which enabled them to settle down at Madraspatam, very close to the Portuguese settlement of St. Thome. The Hindu raja of that place afforded the English more congenial terms, from which Madras grew up round Fort St. George. In 1641 the English Company shifted its headquarters on the east coast from Masulipatam to Madras. Bombay too was acquired as a consequence of

friendly relations with the Portuguese. The accession of Charles II in England, and his marriage with the Portuguese Catherine of Braganza, brought this island into the possession of the English. "By a secret article of the marriage treaty with Portugal (1661) England guaranteed the Portuguese possessions in the East against the Dutch, and to facilitate this the island of Bombay was included in the dowry of the new queen". Since the cost of maintaining this island was found to be too great, the king leased it to the East India Company, as stated before, for an annual rental of £10, on 23rd September 1668.

Though the Dutch and the English were enemies for many years, the English were too shrewd not to profit by the Dutch example. In most matters they followed the Dutch rather than the Portuguese model. "Our design," wrote the Court of Directors of the East India Company in 1687, "is to set up the Dutch Government among the English in India (than which a better cannot be invented) for the good of posterity and to put us upon an equal foot of power with them to defend or offend or enlarge the English dominion, and unite the strength of our nation under one entire and absolute command subject as we are and ever shall be most dutiful to our sovereign, with this distinction that we will always observe our own English terms, viz., Attorney General instead of Fiscal... President and Agent instead of Commodore, Directore, or Commisaries". In 1688, by the Glorious Revolution, Dutch William was invited to rule over England. Fort William at Calcutta was named after him. In 1700 it became the seat of a Presidency, with Sir Charles Eyre as its first President and Governor.

The vicissitudes in the fortunes of the East India Company (as it came to be popularly known) are not strictly relevant to our theme. But a few of its outstanding landmarks may be recounted as necessary links in our story, not without a bearing on the future developments in India of that unique body. Despite occasional periods of depression, brought about more by internal competition than by lack of opportunities for profit in India, the Company was on the whole prosperous. Its example was so alluring that other English merchants (excluded by the monopoly conferred on the original Company by Queen Elizabeth's charter) soon became a source of keen rivalry. In the course of time, these "interlopers" were encouraged by a resolution of the House of Commons (in January 1694) to the effect that "all subjects of England have equal right to trade to the East Indies, unless prohibited by Act of Parliament". They incorporated themselves into a "General

Society" of *English* merchants as distinguished from the *London* merchants of the "Old Company". Ultimately (1709) the Old and the New Companies were amalgamated into "The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies". This was the East India Company familiarly so called.

How profitable this venture was may be illustrated with a few examples taken at random. It yielded a dividend of 20 p.c. during the years 1662-4; and double that amount in 1665. "In 1682 the Company was able not only to pay 50 per cent. in money but to declare a bonus of double that figure, crediting each share-holder with the half-payment still due on the original subscription." During the four decades preceding the great contest with France (to be described later) (1708-48), the value of the Company's imports into England rose from £500,000 to £1,100,000; while its exports increased from £576,000 in 1710 to £1,121,000 forty years later. The total capital of the Company, i.e., its commercial stock, at the time of its closure amounted to £6,000,000. In 1708-9 it paid a dividend of 5 per cent.; in 1711-12 this rose to 10 p.c., which rate was maintained during the next ten years. Dropping to 7 p.c. in 1732, it again rose to 8 p.c. in 1743, and remained at that level till 1755.

Some idea of the Company's political authority may be had from the fact that, by various charters of the seventeenth century, it got the power "to seize and send home interlopers: to wage war and conclude peace with non-Christian princes: and to appoint governors, who, in conjunction with their councils, were to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction at the various settlements". Under that authority, the agent at Madras was created Governor of Fort St. George in 1666; and on the transfer of headquarters to Bombay (1687) the Surat president was made Governor of that island.

"The immense riches," wrote the French historian Abbe Guyon, in 1774, "which the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch had drawn from the East Indies, invited the French to follow them in those remote and unknown countries, in order to partake of the advantage of which commerce was there productive". French monarchs exhorted their subjects to emulate the example of the Portuguese and the Spaniards quite early in the sixteenth century, and in July 1527 a Norman ship actually appeared at Diu, according to Barros. In the time of Louis XIII, a

Company was floated under 'letters patent', in July 1615, but the French were too diffident and felt that "the Spaniards and Dutch are too strong to suffer it". Nevertheless, they declared: "the trade that could be done with the East Indies and Persia...ought not to be neglected." An effective beginning was, however, not made till 1664 when the gifted minister of Louis XIV, Colbert, constituted the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, with a capital of 15,000,000 francs and concessions for exclusive trading for fifty years. Out of this amount 3,000,000 francs were advanced by the State which also guaranteed to cover all losses that might be suffered by the company during the first ten years of its existence. No better encouragement could have been given to any body of traders. Yet the venture came to nothing. Not content with mere trading, the French also attempted colonisation, and came to grief. Their early endeavours in that direction were shattered on the island of Madagascar; but they secured a permanent footing on the neighbouring islands of France and Bourbon (Mauritius). With these as their bases, or half-way houses, they turned to India in 1670.

The first voyage to this country was made under Jacob Blanquet de la Haye who was nominated "governor and Lieutenant-general for the King in Ile Dauphine (Madagascar) and in all India". Meanwhile, French plans in India had been, already, entrusted to one Francois Caron: a Frenchman born in Holland and long under Dutch service in the Far East. He was a self-made man with a forceful character, whom Colbert designated "Director-General of French commerce in India". On 24th December 1667 Caron touched Cochin, proceeded to Surat, and established there the first French factory in India (1668). With him was a Persian named Marçara who, in 1669, obtained from the ruler of Golkonda a *firman* to establish a factory at Masulipatam. Despite the preliminary advantages thus secured, the leaders of French enterprise in India betrayed, from the very outset, a weakness that was to prove fatal to them ultimately. They were incapable of mutual appreciation, concerted action and total subordination to their overriding national interests. Hence they failed to effect a lodging at Trincomali in Ceylon where the Dutch offered them stout opposition. A temporary success was obtained at St. Thome (near Madras) where La Haye, with the loss of only five men, dispossessed the Dutch even as the Dutch had previously expelled the Portuguese. But the Dutch gave them no peace. With the help of the ruler of Golkonda, the French were soon driven out of St. Thome as well. M. La Haye fled to Surat, and the position and prestige of

the French on the east coast were retrieved only by the genius of a single man: Francois Martin. The loss of Trincomali and St. Thome was more than made good by the acquisition of Pondicherry.

Martin was to the French what Albuquerque had been to the Portuguese. He was the founder and real maker of "French India". He made friends with Sher Khan Lodi, the Nawab of Arcot, and obtained from him the villages of Puducherri, Villanur and Bahur (covering an area of 113 square miles), which formed the basis on which Pondicherry rapidly grew in power and importance. From its first occupation, in April 1674, except for short intervals when the fortunes of war transferred it to the Dutch or the English, Pondicherry remained the stronghold of French power in India. Martin created a beautiful and well fortified modern settlement out of the three villages obtained from the Nawab of Arcot, and informed the Company at home that he would annually send them goods worth 1,000,000 francs. But his inveterate enemies, the Dutch, could not brook French prosperity. In 1693 they attacked Pondicherry in force and undid the good work of Martin. France was at that time fighting in Europe against Spain, Germany, Holland and England. Yet by the Peace of Ryswick, four years later (21 September 1697), Pondicherry was restored to the French. Martin was again appointed its Governor. In February 1701 he was, by 'letters patent', nominated "Director-General of the French possessions in India". Those possessions then included Surat (since 1668), Masulipatam (since 1669), Chandranagar, 22 miles north of Calcutta, on the right bank of the Hugli (since 1676), and a few minor holdings at Dacca, Kasimbazar, Balasore, Patna, and Calicut. Martin died on 31st December 1706 after having rendered meritorious services to his country. Mahe and Karikal were acquired after him (1725-39). The ablest of his successors were M. Dumas (1735-41) and M. Dupleix (1741-54). More about these later. Suffice it here to note that, after Martin, the French settlements fell on evil days, and their factory at Surat was closed down in 1714. So ignominious was the failure of the French at Surat that they lost all credit among the natives as well as the Europeans. If the French recovered their prestige and power thereafter, it was entirely due to the abilities of Dumas and Dupleix.

4. Indian Reactions

We witnessed in the foregoing pages how the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, and the French, not only built up a lucrative trade with India, in the course of about two

centuries from the discovery of the Cape route, but also acquired permanent foot-holds on our soil. At present all of them, with the exception of the Dutch, continue to have stakes in this country, though the British have politically withdrawn from their sovereign position. The loss of the Dutch possessions in India was not due to any effort of the Indians at any time. The Europeans came to India because of our wealth; they continued to stay here because of our naivete and lack of national sentiment. As with the Arabs when they first came to India as traders and missionaries, so with the Europeans, Indians showed an unsuspecting hospitality or 'open door' policy that proved harmful very soon. In the absence of a national or patriotic outlook, such as that which marked the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and the French in their mutual relations, we exposed ourselves to being conquered or exploited piecemeal by all of them. What Bertrand Russell remarked about the Chinese was equally true of the Indians: they had virtues which were useful to the foreigners, and weaknesses that were harmful to themselves. The Europeans profited alike from our goodness and our dissensions.

As at the time of Babur, no united front was offered to the enemy. The Zamorin of Calicut and the Raja of Cochin were hostile towards each other, and the Portuguese found it easy to divide and conquer them. Yet for nearly a hundred years the admirals of Calicut put up a heroic fight in the Arabian Sea against the best captains the Portuguese could muster. On one occasion the redoubtable Albuquerque himself was grievously wounded, and the Portuguese flag captured, when they attempted a forced landing at Calicut. The greatest of the Malabâr admirals was Kunjali III who was dreaded by the Portuguese, like Kanhoji Angre of the Marathas. For full forty years he held the European adventurers at bay, from Diu in the North to Cape Comorin in the South. Occasionally, he made sallies into the Bay of Bengal and attacked the Portuguese settlements there. His naval bases were at Ponnani and Kottakkal a little to the south of Calicut. Kunjali died in 1595.

At one stage the Zamorin invited the co-operation of not only the Sultan of Gujarat, but also of Suleiman the Magnificent of Turkey. The latter sent out a fleet "to avert the evil deeds of the Portuguese infidels and remove their flag from the sea". Bahadur Shah of Gujarat died fighting against the European intruders, in 1537. Though a few respectable actions were fought, there was no unity of interest to sustain the allies on the Indian side, and they

could not long hold out against the naval superiority of the Portuguese.

The real enemies of the Portuguese were the Dutch. They were shrewd enough to avoid the mistakes of their predecessors, and wormed themselves into the favour of the native powers. They entered into an alliance with "the Zamorin and Emperor of Malabar", and wisely followed a policy of religious neutrality. This paid them good dividends. They were welcomed everywhere as allies in the task of driving away the unwanted Portuguese. In return they secured trade concessions advantageous to themselves. Very soon they enveloped the whole island of Ceylon which gave them a dominating position in the Indian Ocean: it was a convenient base on the way to the East Indies, and of strategic advantage against the Portuguese nestling along the Indian littoral. We have noted before how they turned the French out of Ceylon, and even out of St. Thome. This was rendered easy because of the support they secured from the Sultan of Golkonda. At Masulipatam they enjoyed the status of 'the most favoured nation'. As late as 1718, the English wrote: "Their strength is greatly superior to ours and all other Europeans joined together, and nothing but the Powers in Europe makes them afraid to put it against any or all of their competitors in the trade of India."

The Portuguese, in the beginning, were generally friendly with the Hindus and relatively more opposed to the Muslims. Consequently they largely profited from the toleration and patronage of the Rayas of Vijayanagar. The destruction of that great Hindu Empire, in 1565, was therefore a calamity for the Portuguese. As conquerors of Goa in the Sultan of Bijapur's territory, and as long-standing enemies of the Sultans of Gujarat, they were looked upon as hostile by most of the Muslim rulers of India. Though the Mughal Emperors were, on the whole, friendly towards them, the Portuguese cared only for their own interests and often incurred the wrath of their Imperial patrons by their dishonesty. The Jesuits had no small share in the game of duplicity. For instance, while Akbar was fighting in the Deccan against Khandesh, his enemies were assisted from Góa by the Portuguese. On the contrary, when the Emperor asked for similar help, Fr. Xavier* declined, on the ground that such action was "contrary to the Christian faith". Likewise, after the fall of Asirgarh (1601), it was discovered that there were several Portuguese officers among the defenders. The fact was that the Jesuits and

* Fr. Jerome Xavier (grand-nephew of St. Francis Xavier).

the Portuguese were acting in unison, "working sometimes for the conversion of Emperors, and sometimes for the material advancement of the Portuguese." Nevertheless, the Mughals were dependent on the Europeans even for the protection of the Muslim pilgrim traffic to Mecca.

Akbar's eclecticism and sympathy for the Christians is well known. Though he disappointed the Jesuit missionaries by refusing to be converted, he did everything short of that consummation. He permitted the Jesuits to convert others, to build churches, and to carry on their educational activities without let or hindrance. Even princes of the Imperial family were allowed to be baptised. The same policy was pursued by Jahangir. Europeans of all nationalities were granted facilities to carry on peaceful trade within the Empire. Bernier (the French ambassador) wrote that the Portuguese and their dependants, driven out by the Dutch, sought asylum in Bengal. "The Jesuits and Augustins, who have large churches and are permitted the free and unmolested exercise of their religion," he states, "assured me that Ogouli (Hugli) alone contains from eight to nine thousand Christians, and that in other parts of the Kingdom their number exceeded five-and-twenty thousand. The rich exuberance of the country, together with the beauty and amiable disposition of the native women, has given rise to a proverb, in common use among the Portuguese, English and Dutch, that the kingdom of Bengale has *a hundred gates open for entrance, but not one for departure.*" Despite these considerations, the Portuguese, in the time of Shah Jahan, behaved egregiously towards their patrons. According to Manucci, they had the monopoly of the salt trade throughout the province of Bengal. Yet they were not content with mere trade. They indulged in reckless piracies and proselytisation. Bernier testifies that, penetrating forty or fifty leagues up country from the river-mouths, they "carried away the entire population of villages on market days, and at times when the inhabitants were assembled for celebration of marriage or some other festival... They would even offer for sale the aged people in their very places of residence, and it was a pathetic sight to see young men redeeming their parents". Regarding conversions, Bernier relates that they boasted of having made "more Christians in a twelve month than all the missionaries in the Indies do in ten years." Little wonder that Shah Jahan came down upon them with a heavy hand, and, as the *Badshah-nama* records: "4,400 Christians of both sexes were taken prisoner, and nearly 10,000 inhabitants of the neighbouring country, who had

been kept in 'confinement by these tyrants, were set at liberty."

In spite of the wholesome advice of Sir Thomas Roe, the English, in the time of Aurangzeb, preferred to act more in accordance with the ambitious inclinations of Sir Josiah Child. This brought them into head-on collision with that determined Imperialist. During negotiations at Bombay, Khafi Khan warned the English: "The hereditary kings of Bijapur and Hyderabad, no less than the Maratha Samkhaji, have not escaped the hands of King Aurangzeb. *Is the island of Bombay a surer refuge?*" The causes of provocation were many, and not confined to Bombay. We can only very briefly summarise them here.

Trouble arose first of all in Bengal. The English there had obtained a *nishan* or permit, from Prince Shah Shuja, in 1652, by which, for an annual payment of Rs. 3,000, they were exempted from all sorts of customs dues. In 1680, Aurangzeb issued a *firman* by which he allowed the English to trade freely in all parts of his Empire, on the payment of a consolidated $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty at Surat. Evasions arising from the ambiguities in these privileges led to friction between the Imperial officers and the English factors in Bengal. Job Charnock added to these complications by refusing to pay a sum of Rs. 43,000 decreed by an Indian Court of Law, on account of the claims put forward by some brokers of the East India Company. The loss to the Empire from the English evasions may be estimated from their trade returns. In 1668 the Company exported from Bengal goods worth £34,000; in 1675 their value rose to £85,000; to £100,000 in 1677; and £150,000 in 1680. The English complained of the exactions of the customs officers, and protested against inspection of packages during transit. Ultimately they attacked the Mughal town of Hugli and sacked it, on 28th October 1686. Next year they likewise looted and burnt Balasore for two days. Captain Heath, who succeeded Job Charnock, "disgraced the name of England by his great excesses, illtreating Christians and non-Christians, men and women alike." He tried to forcibly seize Chittagong, but was obliged to quit Bengal, on 17th February 1689. On receiving reports of these dangerous activities, Aurangzeb ordered the arrest of all Englishmen, the seizure of all their factories, and the prohibition of all trade and intercourse with them. Within a year the English were brought to their senses, and, on the payment of an indemnity of Rs. 150,000, and promising to "behave themselves no more in such a shameful manner", they were pardoned and allowed to trade as before. Job Charnock returned to

Sutanuti, as Agent, on 24th August 1690,* and laid the foundations of Calcutta. On 10th February 1691, an Imperial order was issued to the Diwan of Bengal, allowing the English to carry on their trade in that province without molestation, on their paying Rs. 3,000 a year in lieu of all other customs dues.

History repeated itself on the west coast, as the result of instructions received from home. Sir John Child, Director-in-Chief of the English factories in India, tried to repeat the exploits of his countrymen in Bengal with not less ignominious consequences. "The expedition," as V. A. Smith has observed, "rashly planned and unfortunate in execution, was an utter failure." The English factory at Surat was invested by the Mughal troops and its Chief was kept in irons for sixteen months from December 1688 to April 1690. Governor Child having made submission at Bombay, pardon was obtained from the Emperor on payment of Rs. 150,000 and the restitution of goods taken from Indian ships.

Piracy was rampant on the Arabian Sea, and the hands of the English were not clean in this respect. Among the corsairs were men sent out by Sir William Courteen and Cobb, who had charters from Charles I of England; and yet they robbed Indian vessels and tortured their crews. But the most notorious were Teach, Evory, Kidd, Roberts, England and Tew. Roberts alone despoiled no fewer than 400 ships in three years. "Their friends on shore supplied their wants and gave them timely information of rich prizes to be looked for, or armed ships to be avoided. Officials high in authority winked at their doings from which they drew a profit." (Sarkar). In 1681 Evory (Henry Bridgman) captured the *Ganj-i-sawai*, belonging to the Mughal Emperor, and secured booty worth Rs. 6,00,000. Khafi Khan has left us a very vivid account of the ship's struggle for survival. When the pirates secured their prize, they hauled her up ashore near their settlement, and "busied themselves for a week, searching for plunder, stripping the men, and dishonouring the women, both old and young. Then they left the ship carrying off the men. Several honourable women, when they found an opportunity, threw themselves into the sea to preserve their chastity, and some others killed themselves with knives and daggers." (E.&D.VII, pp.350-351). The reporter (Khafi Khan) was sent by Aurangzeb to obtain satisfaction from the English authorities at Bombay, in connection with this incident as well as other matters. They also minted their own coins without the permission of the Emperor, on the pretext that they were needed for remittances home where

the Mughal currency had no value. According to Khafi Khan's information, the total revenue of the English at Bombay was not more than 2 or 3 *lakhs* of rupees, and their profits from trade amounted to 20 *lakhs*. "The balance of the money required for the maintenance of the English settlement," writes the Imperial historian, "is obtained by plundering the ships voyaging to the House of God (Mecca), of which they take one or two every year."

In 1695 the English gave an undertaking to Aurangzeb that they would no more indulge the pirates and that they would afford protection to the Indian ships for a consideration. Nevertheless, Captain W. Kidd, who was commissioned by a syndicate of merchants in England, to root out piracy in the Indian Ocean, himself joined the sea-robbers and pretended that his depredations were "legitimate acts of privateering authorised by the King of England"! His fleet, led by the gun-boat *Adventure*, mounted in all 120 guns, and was manned by no fewer than 300 Europeans, of whom the great majority were Englishmen. That was in 1696-7. In the result, Amanat Khan, the Mughal governor of Surat, issued an ultimatum to the European settlers, in December 1698, whereby he demanded that they should undertake effectively to guard the seas, or leave the country within ten days. Consequently, the English, the French, and the Dutch executed bonds to indemnify all losses thereafter. The Dutch paid Rs. 70,000 and undertook to convoy the pilgrim ships and to patrol the entrance to the Red Sea; the French and the English too, paid Rs. 30,000 each, and bound themselves to police the Persian Gulf and the South Indian Seas, respectively. Nevertheless, the seas were not rendered entirely safe for a long time, and the returns prepared in 1702 showed that the captives brought to Surat numbered 109 persons, including 21 officials of the Company! Aurangzeb was too deeply entangled in his war with the Marathas to be able to protect his ships from the pirates. Nay, he wanted the help of the Europeans to suppress the Marathas.

The Europeans feared the Marathas more than they respected them. Up to the date of his coronation Shivaji was regarded by them as a rebel against the Mughal Emperor. Still he was becoming too powerful year after year to be lightly dismissed. Hence, perhaps, the best course for them was to play for safety. This the English certainly managed to do quite dexterously, employing a judicious mixture of cajolery, evasion, and sometimes even deliberate deceit. The French and the Dutch interests were concentrated mainly on the Coromandel coast, though they owned a few factories on the western side at Surat,

Vengurla, Rajapur, and so on. They managed to buy immunity from Shivaji, as they did during his famous raids on Surat. Confessedly, the Dutch made a profit out of those raids by way of compensation received from Aurangzeb, as we noted before. During Shivaji's Carnatic campaign, M. Martin tactfully saved the French settlement by a show of formal submission. His later successor M. Dumas, too, cleverly diverted the Maratha leader, Raghuji Bhonsle, in 1741, with thirty bottles of 'Nantes cordials', and thus saved Pondicherry. The Portuguese proved by far the most mischievous. Often the English and the Portuguese acted in unison, together with the Siddis of Janjira.

Shivaji was not merely irresistible on land, but had created a respectable naval force for the protection of the Konkan coast. His ships cruised as far as Mocha and at one time, according to Sabhasad, numbered about 700. They were regarded as a menace by the Europeans and the Siddis alike. Yet, on 24th May 1663, an English dispatch to Surat observed: "All the way, as he (Shivaji) goes along, gives his *qaul* (assurance) promising them that neither he nor his soldiers shall in the least do any wrong to anybody that takes his *qaul*, which promise he hitherto hath kept". But events were moving very fast, and it was no time for taking any risks. During Shivaji's raid on Surat, in 1664, the English narrowly escaped; ten years later, in 1674, they had a friendly invitation from the Maratha Raja to witness his grand coronation ceremony. Between these two big events, they followed a very cautious policy. Surat advised Bombay "not to positively promise him the grenades, mortar pieces, and ammunition he desires, nor to absolutely deny him, in regard we do not think it convenient to help him". When guns were sold to the Marathas, as tokens of friendship, the English factors saw to it that they were "defective and not worth the money paid for them." (D. Kincaid, *The Grand Rebel*, p.142). Nevertheless, on the whole, their relations with Shivaji were cordial. They described him frankly as "our fairest friend and noblest enemy". On 10th July 1674, the Bombay Council noted with satisfaction that "Mr. Henry Oxenden returned from Sevagy with whom a *firm peace* is settled and articles signed between the Hon'ble Company and him". (See Note at the end of this chapter). Despite this, there was a clash between the Marathas and the Bombay factors in the closing years of Shivaji's life, over the occupation of the twin islands of 'Henry-Kenry'. In this Shivaji completely triumphed over the English who were punished for their rashness. They were rebuked for it by the English authorities in London. They stated: "Now...the hostilities

lately entered into with Sevagee about Hendry Kendry, renew and aggravate our further charge and trouble, when we hoped we had arrived at an undisturbed and prosperous posture of affaires, and that the Island Revenues would have quite eased us of further expenses and have yielded somewhat of retribution for those expensive charges we have laid out upon it." This was a reiteration of the original policy, not as yet abandoned, by which the Directors declared: "In general we must needs say that peace and not warr is the Element in which Trade thrives and flourishes and 'tis not the interest of a Company of Merchants to launch into those great charges which unavoidably attend it, especially where the opposition is considerable and the event very hazardous."

After Shivaji, the English followed a still more cautious policy in their dealings with the Marathas, as everything seemed to go into the melting pot. Till his death in 1707, Aurangzeb was in the Deccan with all his forces, and the Europeans could not afford to antagonise him. Then arose a great sea captain among the Marathas, viz., Kanhoji Angre, who was a terror to all on the western sea-board, until his death on 4th July 1729. With his strongholds in Kolaba, Suvarnadurg and Vijayadurg (Gheria), he dominated the entire coast, in spite of the conjoined opposition of the English, the Portuguese and the Siddis. His loyalty to Shahu was secured for the Maratha cause by the tact of the Peshva Balaji Vishvanath, by the treaty of Lohagad (1714). But his sons provided the necessary opportunity to all their enemies, by their utter lack of respect for moral principles and patriotic feelings. The Peshva Balaji Bajirao showed the doubtful wisdom of calling in the assistance of the English for the reduction of the rebellious Tulaji Angre, in 1755. Consequently, Vijayadurg was captured along with Tulaji, in February 1756, with the aid of an English squadron under Clive and Watson. The allies received ample compensation for this assistance, but despite this, their relations with the Marathas did not continue to be friendly.

The Portuguese were on their last legs, politically speaking, in India. That did not prevent them from making hay while the sun shone. Their attitude towards the Marathas was always hostile, though they sometimes dissimulated friendship towards them. For instance, on 26th April 1663, the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa, de Castro, wrote to Shivaji promising help, "not only on account of your brave acts, but also for the good friendship which the Portuguese will find in Your Highness. . . And I hope that from the present struggle Your Highness will come out victorious." But

when Jai Singh led his great campaign against Shivaji, the same de Castro wrote to Jai Singh on 31st March 1665: "It pleases me very much to have so near such a good neighbour. Between our King, my lord, and the King Sultan Aurangzeb exists peace and friendship which has lasted for several years... From these lands was never given help or favour to Shivaji... I hereby send orders to the North that they should not give Shivaji any kind of favour nor admit any of his people into our lands, and the same will be done from this side." They fought against Sambhaji, and assisted the Mughals, the Siddis, and the English whenever hostilities prevailed against the Marathas. It was on this account that Chimaji Appa (brother of Bajirao I) led his great expedition against Bassein, and drove the Portuguese out of Salsette, in 1739. During the war against Tulaji Angre, they tried to create a diversion by an attack on Phonda (a Maratha outpost south of Goa). But the Marathas stoutly defended it and the Portuguese Governor, Count de Alva, lost his life in this adventure (June 1756).

5. *The Anglo-French Contest*

The struggle between the English and the French in India was but a continuation and part of the wider contest that was going on in Europe and elsewhere for world-supremacy, particularly in commerce and colonisation. Its political consequences were not fully realised before the close of the Seven Years' War (1756-63). The Treaty of Paris which summed up that phase of the struggle between England and France, clearly showed that the future would lie with the former country rather than with the latter. It was a verdict for naval supremacy over all other forces and an eye-opener for those in India pointing to the superiority of scientific warfare over blind faith in the massing of mere bipeds and quadrupeds (men, horses and elephants). Yet contemporary India seemed to suffer from a fatal myopia that gave the advantage to the Europeans out of which the English reaped the richest harvest. The weaknesses of the Indians were more responsible for that outcome than anything else that favoured the English against their French rivals. Foreign historians have approached this situation from their own angle; but we should look at it from ours.

In the preceding section we reviewed Indian reactions to the varied activities of the Europeans in the different parts of the country during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Then India was essentially strong and the Europeans were supplicants seeking patronage at the Courts of the various Indian rulers, small and great. During the

eighteenth century, the Mughal Empire was fast dissolving on account of the frequent palace-revolutions at the centre and the self-centred disloyalty of its provincial *subahdars*. At the same time, two formidable invasions from the north-west, Nadir Shah's in 1739 and Abdali's in 1761, demonstrated the feebleness of the Imperial pretenders at Delhi. The expansion of Maratha power into North India, far from improving matters, only served to paralyse the country and distract the nation. In their haste to capture Delhi and dominate Hindusthan, the Marathas ignored or weakened the South. But for their solitary success against the Portuguese at Bassein (1739), they neglected the growing power of the Europeans. In the hey-day of the Peshvas' regime, Raghuji Bhonsle was content to brush past the English and French settlements in the Carnatic, in 1741, regaling himself with the *Nantes cordials* supplied by M. Dumas. Yet the years immediately following, as we shall presently see, were to lay the foundations of the British Empire in India. The excavations for these foundations were prepared by Dupleix during his governorship of Pondicherry (1741-54). His recall in 1754 marked the commencement of British triumphs. The very next year the Peshva sought the assistance of the English, to put down the intractable Angre (1755-56), and Gheria was captured by Clive and Watson. Sixteen months later, on 23rd June 1757, Clive won his resounding victory at Plassey. Then the Marathas were drawn more and more into fateful entanglements with the English, to wit, the treaties of Surat (1776) and Salbai (1782). It only remained for the English, from being *one* of the powers, to become *the* power to reckon with in India. But that process commenced in the Carnatic with the appointment of Dupleix as Director-General of the French settlements in India, in 1741.

"The first cannon shot fired in our lands," declared Voltaire, "was to set the match to all the batteries in America and in Asia". Though this was true of the Austrian Succession (1740-48) and Seven Years' Wars (1756-63), hostilities between the French and the English in India did not always wait for ignition to come from Europe. For instance, while the two nations were at peace in Europe, between 1748 and 1756, they fought with each other in India. Hence the situation here contributed at least as much to the conflict between the English and the French, as what happened in the West.

Since the foundation of Pondicherry, in 1674, the French Company had suffered financially for a time, as we noticed before. But there was a revival after the return of Francois

Martin, and the wise administrations of Lenoir and Dumas. The French East India Company was reconstituted as the 'Perpetual Company of the Indies' in 1720. Mahe, in Malabar, was acquired in 1725 and Karikal, on the Coromandel Coast, in 1739. It was to such a growing settlement that M. Dupleix came as Director-General in 1741. Before that he had been in Pondicherry and later at Chandranagar in Bengal, where he made a mark by his enterprise. Meanwhile the English settlements in three different corners of India—viz., Bombay, Madras and Calcutta—had also grown rapidly. They now threatened to outstrip the French everywhere. But direct conflict arose between the two on the Coromandel coast. Madras and Pondicherry were too near each other, (the English factory of Fort St. David was closer still to the French capital) to avoid mutual attacks in time of war. And war was impending soon after Dupleix took charge at Pondicherry. The War of the Austrian Succession had started in Europe, with Frederick of Prussia's invasion of Silesia in 1740. France having ranged herself on the side of the aggressor, England supported the cause of Maria Theresa of Austria, at first (1742) by subsidies and then by open declaration of war against France in 1744. These events had their natural repercussions in India where in any case the situation was ripening for hostilities.

The Maratha invasion of the Carnatic (in 1741), under Raghuji Bhonsle, has been referred to before. Though it left the European settlements intact, it had shaken the Carnatic to an extent that compelled Asaf Jah (Nizam-ul-Mulk I), as overlord of the Nawab of Arcot, to come down and restore its administration. Dost Ali, the former Nawab, having been killed during the Maratha invasion, Nizam-ul-Mulk appointed one of his old servants, Anwar-ud-din, as the New Nawab. But that made for fresh trouble. Dost Ali's family were rulers of the Carnatic during the three decades preceding, and they would not lightly forsake their claims. Yet one of their candidates for the nawabship, Chanda Saheb (son-in-law of Dost Ali), had been carried away by the Marathas as a prisoner to Satara when they besieged Trichinopoly. However, when Asaf Jah himself died in 1748, a double contest for the two *gadis* of Hyderabad and Arcot arose simultaneously as Anwar-ud-din too had fallen in August 1749.

The contest for the Nizam's *gadi* has been described before. His immediate successor was his second son Nasir Jang, the eldest son having been removed by poison. Soon Nasir Jang too was assassinated by a Pathan enemy, in December 1750, while he was in the Carnatic. His place

was immediately taken by his nephew Muzaffar Jang. But Muzaffar also was murdered by the assassin of Nasir, in February 1751. The next claimant to the Nizam's *gadi* was Salabat Jang. In the Carnatic, the rivals to the nawabship were Muhammad Ali (son of Anwar-ud-din) and Chanda Saheb (son-in-law of Dost Ali). The latter had been ransomed from Satara by Dupleix to be a pawn in the diplomatic game he was playing with masterly art against his English rivals. The latter consequently backed the claims of Muhammad Ali. It is extremely interesting to note how the tables were ultimately turned against Dupleix and the French by destiny, whose instrument was Clive.

Dupleix "had studied sedulously the complicated native politics of southern India, and soon found in them a promising field for the exercise of his peculiar talents." Before hostilities became inevitable he had tried to forestall the English in several ways. He pushed on with the work of improving the fortifications of Pondicherry. At the same time, he tried to lull the English at Madras into a compact to keep the peace in India, even if hostilities should break out in Europe. In this he failed. More than anything else, he tried to win the support of the Nawab of Carnatic in case the French position should be endangered by their enemies. He succeeded well in this last line of policy, until deeper forces came into play. Like the hero's in a tragic drama, Dupleix's character was composed of mixed traits; indeed those traits were a part of the national character of the French, as we shall presently see. The English had the genius to profit by all the errors of their rivals, and even to employ their enemy's technique with great advantage to themselves.

When war was declared against France, in 1744, an English squadron was dispatched to Madras under Commodore Barnett, who announced his arrival in eastern waters by the capture of several French ships bound for China. Dupleix asked for naval protection post haste from Mauritius, and at the same time screened the French vessels under the flag of the Nawab of Carnatic. When the English saw through this feint and attacked the French, despite their flying the Nawab's flag, Dupleix complained to Anwar-ud-din whose favour he had sedulously cultivated. Nevertheless, the English Governor of Madras excused himself to the Nawab for this challenge to his sovereignty by blaming the Commodore, over whom, he pleaded, he had no jurisdiction. Meantime the French fleet under La Bourdonnais arrived. The redoubtable Barnett was dead and his place had been taken by Peyton who was no match

for the newly arrived French admiral. Consequently, the French easily captured Madras suffering no casualties (September 1746). "The military conduct of the English on this occasion," writes Dodwell, "was about on a level with their conduct at sea." In their turn, having no other remedy, they invoked the intervention of the Nawab. But that intervention served only to expose the impotence of the ruler of the Carnatic, and to advertise the invincibility of the French under Dupleix's consummate leadership. The latter held Madras firmly until its restoration to the English by order of the French Government, under the terms of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which terminated the War of the Austrian Succession in Europe (1748). Intervening on behalf of the English, the Nawab's forces were twice beaten off by the French at Madras. It was a double triumph: the military triumph of artillery over native cavalry, and the political triumph of the French over the effete sovereignty of the Nawab.

Dupleix, however, would not rest content with this result. The forced restoration of Madras to the English only whetted his appetite for *revanche* on Anwar-ud-din for his recent intervention. He was also greatly encouraged by his military success over the Nawab and the English. He now decided to play his trump card. He ransomed Chanda Saheb (Anwar-ud-din's rival) from Satara and sent a force against Anwar-ud-din. On 16th July 1749 the Nawab was defeated and killed at Ambur. Chanda Saheb rewarded the French with generous grants and concessions, which gave them commercial as well as strategic advantages over the English. The latter therefore decided to emulate Dupleix's example, and lent their support to Chanda Saheb's rival Muhammad Ali (son of Anwar-ud-din). Hence war became inevitable in the Carnatic, involving the English and the French in hostilities, although their countries had been at peace in Europe since 1748. Further complications were introduced by the contest for the *gadi* between the survivors of Nizam-ul-Mulk who had died in 1748.

Nasir Jang, the first successor to the Nizam, as noted before, had a rival in his own nephew Muzaffar Jang. The English supported the former, and the French the latter. Nasir Jang, at the instance of the English, invaded the Carnatic, but was killed in December 1750. On 15th January 1751, Dupleix dispatched de Bussy northward with an escort to install Mazaffar Jang in Hyderabad. Meanwhile Muhammad Ali was being besieged in Trichinopoly, by the forces of Chanda Saheb and his French allies. It was in this situation that Robert Clive made his

mark by his brilliant counter-attack on Arcot, the capital of Chanda Saheb. This diversion afforded relief to the garrison at Trichinopoly, while at the same time Chanda Saheb was placed in a quandary. In spite of his investing Arcot with a counter-siege (which lasted for 53 days) during which Clive and his tiny detachment of 200 English and 300 Indian soldiers made a magnificent defence (23rd September to 14th November, 1751). Chanda Saheb lost heart and met with a fatal end. He is described by Orme as "a brave, benevolent, humane and generous man", but he fell a victim to his enemies. Muhammad Ali, though a worthless man and only the illegitimate son of the late Nawab, became the undisputed master of the Carnatic, thanks to the genius of Clive and the fortunes of war.

The parallel designs of Dupleix in the Deccan did not yield the fruits he had sanguinely expected. Muzaffar Jang too was removed by assassination in February 1751. De Bussy found a substitute in Salabat Jang, the third son of Asaf Jah. For the time being he thrived enormously at Hyderabad. "In the course of a year he passed from poverty to opulence". In 1753 he obtained from the puppet Nizam the assignment of the Northern Circars* for the payment of his French troops. He could also send some financial aid to Dupleix for his costly operations in the Carnatic. For a time Dupleix even contemplated sending De Bussy to Bengal to overthrow the English there. But all his grandiose plans miscarried, when he was recalled by the authorities in France, in August 1754.

The recall of Dupleix was due to several reasons. He had a tussle with La Bourdonnais over the occupation of Madras, and his prejudicial reports home brought about the sad end of that distinguished admiral (in 1753). On the other hand, his triumph at Madras, and a few subsequent military successes lit the flame of ambition in Dupleix's mind and made him dream of a French Empire in India. So he was led through devious paths involving his nation in financial losses and political embarrassments. He claimed to have received the title of "nawab" from the Muhammadal Emperor. He launched on the dubious enterprise of meddling in the native politics. Militarily he committed the blunder of sending de Bussy, the ablest of his officers, to Hyderabad and thence commissioned him for the more hazardous adventure of attacking the English in Bengal. This naturally deprived the French in the Carnatic of that general's much needed services. Finally, in the face of a

* The present Districts of Guntur, Godavari, Krishna, Ganjam and Vizagapatam.

deteriorating situation, which culminated in disasters to the French in India, he bluffed the home authorities about their grand prospects. Meanwhile Paris got reports to the contrary *via* London, of the realities in India. France neither wanted his political schemes nor the entanglements and losses that they involved. Particularly she desired peace with England. All considerations, therefore, indicated the repatriation of this ambitious patriot. Though Dupleix was obliged to return home so precipitately, he was allowed to retain his *jagir* in the Carnatic, the revenue from which he enjoyed, until it ceased with the next outbreak of war in 1756. He was granted the title of Marquis in 1752, and lived on till 1764. Yet he was in debt and died confessing: "I have sacrificed my youth, my fortune, my life, to enrich my nation in India. . . I am treated as the vilest of mankind. I am in the most deplorable indigence. The little property that remained to me has been seized. I am compelled to ask for decrees for delay in order not to be dragged to prison". No greater tribute could be paid to him than what Malleston has written: "Notwithstanding the neglect of his contemporaries, he will ever be regarded as one of the greatest of Frenchmen. Even the rivals who profited by his recall place him on a pedestal scarcely, if at all, lower than the pedestals upon which stand Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley. In grandness of conception, and in the wide scope of his projects of Empire, he was their forerunner—unconsciously on their part perhaps, their inspirer".

The collapse of the French power in India after the recall of Dupleix was rapid. His immediate reliever, Godeheu, surrendered to the English almost all that Governor Saunders of Madras demanded. Yet peace with the English could not be had for any price, since hostilities between the two countries were authoritatively renewed in 1756. The Seven Years' War (1756-63) blasted French superiority for ever. The most important general they sent out to India during this period was Count de Lally, a man of Irish extraction, in whom Voltaire found "a stubborn fierceness of soul, accompanied by great gentleness of manners". Yet in India he displayed more of the former quality than the latter. This proved the undoing both of Lally and of the French interests here. He was self-willed, haughty and tactless even in his dealings with his own countrymen; with the natives he was intolerable. He arrived in India at the end of April 1758. By that time the situation had deteriorated for the French beyond retrieval. Nevertheless Lally struggled valiantly against all odds. Chandranagar, in Bengal, had been captured by Clive and Watson in 1757.

Subsequently Clive sent two of his ablest lieutenants, Colonel Forde and Colonel Eyre Coote, to the South to meet the challenge from Lally. The latter attempted to capture Madras, but failed. On the other hand, Forde easily occupied the Northern Circars (with the exception of Guntur for reasons explained elsewhere), and Coote defeated Lally at Wandewash, on 21st January 1760. Finally, Pondicherry itself surrendered to the English on 15th January 1761. "In a few months more," wrote Orme, "not a roof was left standing in this once fair and flourishing city". Though there was a restoration of Pondicherry and other places to the French, by the Peace of Paris in 1763, it was Pondicherry, "dismantled, beggared, and bereft of all her influence". Such was the outcome of the venture on which Lally had come out from France with orders to "demolish all the maritime places that he might take from the English, and to transport all the Europeans he should find in them to the Island of Bourbon". However, it was Lally that was transported back to Europe, as a prisoner of war, *via* England to Paris, to be executed for "having betrayed the interests of the King, his dominions, and the Company of the Indies, etc."

The Seven Years' War decided that England, and not France, was to rule the waves and the world. France continued to challenge Great Britain whenever opportunity arose; but in India, with which we are here concerned, her fate was sealed for ever. This is true in spite of the reflections (quoted below) of Colonel Malleon on the battles of Cuddalore in 1783. 1763 was not conclusive in the sense that France and England continued to be at war with each other, but the decision each time was almost a foregone conclusion. The contest round Cuddalore in 1783 was carried on in the context of the American War of Independence. Then France indulged in *revanche* against the old enemy who had deprived her of Canada in 1759, by supporting the rebellious colonists. The siege of Cuddalore on land and the naval actions off that port fought between de Bussy and Stuart on the one side, and admirals Suffren and Hughes on the other side, in 1783, were a part of the war that ended in the recognition of the independence of the U.S.A. by the Treaty of Versailles (3rd September 1783). That did not alter the situation between England and France, certainly not in India. The English mastery of India depended upon Bengal more than upon the Carnatic. But more about this in the next chapter. Even in the Carnatic, in 1783, the struggle ended in favour of the English for all the undoubted genius and heroism of Admiral Suffren.

Malleson, in his great admiration for Suffren, has unconsciously exaggerated the possibilities of the situation in 1783. He has quoted H. H. Wilson who wrote: "It seems probable that but for the opportune occurrence of peace with France, the South of India would have been lost to the English. The annihilation of the army at Cuddalore would have been followed by the siege of Madras, and there was little chance of defending it successfully against Tippoo and the French". The futility of this speculation will become apparent in the pages that follow. Nevertheless we may join Malleson in the well-merited tribute he has bestowed on the French admiral. Suffren "united in his person all the qualities which make a warrior illustrious, a sailor skilful, and a man esteemed. Those who knew him, especially the officers who sailed under his orders, never pronounce his name even now but with respect and admiration". In contrast to this, de Bussy gave away the victory on land because of his personal deterioration since his Hyderabad days. He was "no longer the hardy warrior who had electrified Southern India in the years between 1754 and 1760." In 1783 he was "corrupted by wealth, enervated by luxury, and careful only of his ease". The failure of the French might indeed be attributed to these Bourbon traits. At home France was soon involved in the 'Fall of the Old Order' and the agonies of the Revolution and its continental repercussions. Abroad she was drawn into the fateful schemes of Napoleon. In India Haidar Ali dallied with the prospects of a French alliance, and Tipu Sultan was taken in by the glamour of Napoleon's adventures. But Fate engulfed all of them. Haidar died in 1782 inculcating in his son (like Hannibal's father against Rome) eternal hatred of the English. Tipu donned the tricolour of the French Revolution and gloated on the expected triumphal march of the French legions into the British possessions in India. He was destined to die, though a hero's death, at Srirangapatna in 1799. Meanwhile the English stock in India was progressively rising, and that of the French was everywhere sinking. Despite the English merchantmen (2,266 in all) captured by French privateers during the five years from 1793 and 1797, Napoleon's sailors could not cross the 'little ditch' of the English Channel. Individual French adventurers like de Boigne, Perron and Raymond, continued to keep alive their country's name in India, but they were mere mercenaries in the pay of the Indian rulers. With the advent of Clive and the exit of Dupleix, Providence seemed to have made its choice of the future rulers of India.

Several factors contributed to the collapse of French enterprise, but they need not detain us long. The fundamental reason was the naval superiority of England. Secondly, or initially, though the French started under more direct State patronage than did their rivals, the French Government at home proved their ruin. "It was Dupleix who made French India," writes Malleon, "it was France who lost it". Thirdly, they staked their fortunes in India on the relatively sterile Carnatic as against the fertile province of Bengal which was a more convenient base of supplies than the remotely situated Isle of Bourbon. Lastly, with the exception of Martin, Dupleix, and Suffren, France suffered from a paucity of men who combined within themselves patriotism, ability and character, such as England sent out to India. "The efforts of the greatest amongst her leaders were marred and thwarted by the bickerings and jealousies of subordinates... La Bourdonnais sacrificing the best interests of France to his greed for money and to his jealousy of Dupleix; Godeheu... undoing the brilliant work of his predecessor;... de Leyrit and his Council thwarting Lally; the very Councillors scrambling for illegal gains, and dabbling in speculation; those energies which should have been united against a common enemy employed to ruin one another. Under such circumstances the result could not have been long deferred. Sooner or later it was inevitable." (Malleon).

NOTE: A TREATY BETWEEN SHIVAJI AND THE ENGLISH

The Treaty between Shivaji and the English, signed as a result of Oxenden's embassy to Raigad on the occasion of Shivaji's coronation, illustrates the nature of the "firm peace" settled between the two.

On the day following the coronation, the English embassy comprised of Henry Oxenden, Geo: Robinson, and Thos: Michell were received by the Maratha Raja who promised that "We might now trade securely in all his Dominions without the least apprehension of evil from him, for that the Peace was concluded." On 10th July, 1674, the Bombay Council noted with satisfaction that "Mr. Henry Oxenden returned from Sevagy with whom a firm peace is settled and articles signed between the Hon'ble Company and him". On receiving the report of this, which was sent to Surat and Madras, the latter expressed warm appreciation of "that eminent service you have done your Hon'ble employers in settling soe faire a correspondence with Sevagee... and soe reasonable overtures for advantages both in traffique and neighbourhood, now that the esta-

blishment of his conquests renders him no less concerned for the encouragement of trade than he was formerly for plunder”.

The terms of the Treaty were as follows:—

“Articles of peace, union and friendship between the noble prince Sevagee Rajah and the Hon. East India Company: (1) That from this day forward, there be a true, firm and inviolable peace and amity between the noble prince Sevagee Rajah and the Hon. East India Company, their successors and assignees, and between the lands, countries, subjects and inhabitants of both parties of what degree and quality so ever.

(2) That all acts of enmity, hostility and discord shall cease and be abolished, and that both parties shall abstain and forbear from all plunderings, depredations and injuries whatsoever, public and private, in all places, both by sea and land.

(3) That the said Sevagee Rajah and his subjects and all other inhabitants in his Dominions shall use and treat the English kindly and with respect and honour due to them as friends and confederates, so that they may freely pass by land and water into the countrys, cities and towns belonging to Sevagee Rajah, and there continue soe long as they please, and buy provisions and likewise trade and traffick in goods and commodities of all sorts, paying the usual duties, and be obedient to the civil Government of the respective places, the same kindness to be reciprocally interchanged to the subjects of Sevagee Rajah on the island of Bombay”. (F.R., Bombay, vol. I, pp.30-31; Orme, vol. I, p.185).

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

TRADERS BECOME RULERS

1. *Seed-time of the Empire.* 2. *From the Diwani to the Regulating Act.* 3. *First Governor-General.*

1. *Seed-time of the Empire*

THE foundation and growth of British dominion in India took place under peculiar conditions. Writers have consequently, differed greatly in their understanding and presentation of the subject. During the period of British domination over India historians were governed too much by political considerations to deal with the theme in a free spirit. We are now in a better position to review the entire past without fear or favour. The materials available to us are also ampler than those made use of by earlier historians. The lapse of time contributes equally to a more dispassionate treatment of topics which have now lost their original colours and become significant only as historical incidents. Nevertheless, the story as a whole, even when it is narrated as a 'plain and unvarnished tale', is at once significant and colourful. It was of great pith and moment in the making of modern India.

J. R. Seeley, in his *The Expansion of England*, has provided us with one of the best introductions to the unfolding of the British adventure in India. Apart from giving us the general background against which the developments in India become more intelligible he also reveals to us the mind of England that worked out the 'planless plan' of bringing India under the British Crown. "In India," he says, "we meant one thing, and did quite another... All along we have been looking one way and moving another." We know that the English came to trade, but remained to rule. The story of that transformation is not only of great interest but also full of instruction for us who have to safeguard our freedom. We lost our national independence because of the grave shortcomings that afforded all foreigners very tempting opportunities. We noted in the preceding chapter how the English got the better of their rivals out of the situation in the Carnatic. By dint of their national character and common sense they improved upon the examples of their forerunners and prospered. According to Seeley, "Nothing great that has ever been done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally, so accidentally, as the conquest of India". Yet we shall find that 'there was a method in the madness' which rewarded their casual

enterprises with 'the brightest jewel in the English diadem'. They did not stumble into the Indian Empire 'in a fit of absent-mindedness': it was not all opportunity, but opportunism as well.

Sir Thomas Roe reflected the attitude of his generation in the first quarter of the seventeenth century when he warned his countrymen not to dabble in politics but to concentrate entirely upon trade. By the time of Shivaji, towards the third quarter of that century, the Directors of the Company came to consider, "in general... peace and not warr is the Element in which Trade thrives and flourishes and 'tis not in the interest of a Company of Merchants to launch into those great charges which unavoidably attend it, *especially where the opposition is considerable and the event very hazardous.*" But before the century closed, Sir Josiah Child dreamed of "the condition of a sovereign state in India", and wantonly launched on a hazardous war against the Grand Mughal, with the consequences we have already noticed. A charter of 1683 had given full power to the Company to declare and make peace and war with any of the "heathen nations" and to "raise, arm, train, and muster such military forces as to them shall seem requisite and necessary; and to execute and use within the said plantations, forts, and places, the law called the martial law, for the defence of the said forts, places and plantations against any foreign invasion or domestic insurrection or rebellion" A resolution of the Company in 1688 explicitly declared:

The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care as much as our trade; 'tis that must maintain our forces when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade; 'tis that must make us a nation in India; without that we are but a great number of interlopers, united by His Majesty's royal charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us; and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch in all their general advices that we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade.

Communications to Madras and Bombay, in 1687 and 1689 respectively, announced their determination to "establish such a Polity of civil and military power and create and secure such a large revenue as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come". These declarations, as Sir Courteney Ilbert has correctly pointed out, "foreshadowed the annexations of the next century."

"Our first step to Empire," wrote Seeley, "was very plainly taken with a view of simply defending our factories." Very true. Madras grew into a Presidency out of the efforts which, in the first instance, were deemed necessary to protect Fort St. George and Fort St. David from the French. But Seeley says less than the whole truth when he adds that Bengal too grew "in a similar way out of the evident necessity of protecting Fort William and punishing the Mussalman Nawab... for his atrocity of the Black Hole". The fact is that, since Seeley's time, so much water has flowed out of the rivers of Bengal that 'the golden grains of truth deposited by the stream of time' have been completely shorn of the dross of mythology with which patriotism had sought to cover them. The Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge (Seeley) has picked out four great rulers of India on whom he confers the German title of *Mehrer des Reichs* or 'Increaser of the Empire'. "These are Lord Clive, the founder, Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Lord Dalhousie." He has singled out Warren Hastings for the opprobrious distinction of inaugurating "the revolutionary and corrupt period of British India" from which Cornwallis, in 1785, redeemed it. "From that time it has been morally respectable". Otherwise, according to Seeley, "our Empire might fairly be said to be similar to the Empire of the Spanish in Hispaniola and Peru, and to have sprung entirely out of the reckless pursuit of gain". We shall deal with Cornwallis and his successors in the next chapter. But here we must point out that it is unhistorical to discriminate between the first Governor-General and his great predecessor by the unique distinction referred to above. Closer examination will reveal to us the real role of these two men: both impeached before the highest tribunal of their country, and both acquitted by it.

To go to the roots of the matter, it is necessary for us to survey the situation in Bengal that called out the best as well as the worst in the earliest makers of British India. For this purpose 1740 is a convenient date for many reasons. From that year until 1763 the English and the French were almost continuously at war in India, the former remaining finally supreme among the European powers here. It was in that year too that Alivardi Khan usurped power in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and thereby started a series of events which culminated in the British usurpation of power in the same region which was to be the real seed-bed of their Empire in India. On the long-term view Bengal made and unmade British India. As early as the time of Balban, the 'slave Sultan' of Delhi, the capital of Bengal (Lakh-

nauti) had the reputation of being called *Balghakpur* or the 'City of Rebellions'. Elsewhere in India, too, it was a period of anarchy and misrule. Nadir Shah's invasion of the Punjab in 1739 revealed the weakness of the Mughal authority at Delhi. Bajirao I's conquests in Hindusthan during the immediately preceding years were symptomatic of the same condition. The Marathas were growing strong day by day in all parts of the country. In 1740 Raghuji Bhonsle played havoc in the Carnatic. From the next year onwards he challenged the newly-established authority of Alivardi Khan in Bengal and Orissa. Ultimately the Nawab of Bengal had to buy peace from the Marathas by the cession of Orissa in 1751. The successive deaths of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Emperor Muhammad Shah, and Chhatrapati Shahu, in 1748-9, removed personalities that were centres of such cohesion as existed in their respective spheres. India was being torn asunder, making life precarious everywhere. The conditions that encouraged the French and the English to fight their duel in the Carnatic existed also in Bengal.

Alivardi Khan died in 1756. During the last six years of his regime, when he was free from the Maratha troubles, the old Nawab (he was past 75 years of age) had tried to put his house in order. M. Jean Law, a contemporary Frenchman, remarked: "He understood perfectly well the interests of his government, favoured the poor merchants and administered justice when complaints succeeded in reaching him." On the British side, Mr. Scrafton testified that "he used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death". Towards the English, particularly, he affected great friendliness and declared: "What wrong have the English done, that I should wish them ill?" Yet when they provoked him by their own misdemeanours, as did Commodore Griffin in 1748, Alivardi came down upon them with a heavy hand. Finally they were reconciled to him on payment of an indemnity of Rs. 1,50,000, which amount they were constrained to borrow from the local Seths. Consequently Alivardi Khan granted them a *parwanah* in 1752, facilitating the Company's trade in his territories. In spite of all this, the Europeans did make a hornets' nest about the old Nawab's ears. They continued to fight among themselves heedless of his warnings. They continued to build fortifications despite his assurances of security. When the strong hand of Alivardi was removed by his death in 1756, they conspired to overthrow his dynasty. Circumstances

favourad an earlier fruition of such a revolution than might have been expected.

Like King Lear, Alivardi had only three daughters and no son. He had married them to the three governors of Dacca, Purnia, and Patna. To cut a long story short, all his sons-in-law died during his lifetime, and Alivardi designated Siraj-ud-daula (son of his youngest daughter) who was his favourite, to succeed him. Nevertheless there could be no peaceful succession. Siraj-ud-daula's title was challenged by Shaukat Jang, a son of Alivardi's second daughter, whose claim was supported by Ghasiti Begam (eldest daughter of Alivardi) who was herself childless. Siraj-ud-daula was young (about twenty-five years of age), irascible and of intemperate habits. His rivals were not superior to him in moral character, but they were all brought together by the tyrannical behaviour of Siraj. Among those who cherished a grievance against the new Nawab were his unscrupulous aunts and their paramours, disgruntled old officers like Mir Jaffar (Alivardi's *Bakhshi*) and Raj Vallabh. Wealthy or self-seeking merchants like Jagat Seth and Omichand also swelled the ranks of the conspirators, because of the unwanted Nawab's real or alleged exactions. Roger Drake, who was Chief of the English factories in Bengal, and his colleagues found in this situation an ideal opportunity to feather their own nests. On his side, Siraj-ud-daula, whatever his personal shortcomings, had enough cause to resent this all-round challenge to his legitimate authority. He overcame his domestic enemies by resolute action, and reconstituted his services by dismissing disloyal servants and replacing them with more reliable men. But his greatest enemies proved to be the English. They were determined not only to dethrone Siraj-ud-daula but also, if possible, to make themselves *de facto* rulers of Bengal.

Considering the antecedents of the English in Bengal since the time of Aurangzeb, first Job Charnock's adventures and tax-evasions, and then their more recent political aspirations, enunciated by Child, and demonstrated by the late events in the Carnatic, the Nawab was not to be wholly blamed for suspecting their activities. Not only were they misusing their privileges in the matter of the *dastaks*, but also improving their fortifications without proper authority, under the pretext of impending dangers from their European rivals. Regarding the former abuses we have the frank confession of Captain Rennie who stated: "The injustice of the Moors consists in that... we... gave our *dustucks* or passes to numbers of natives to trade customs free, to the great prejudice of the Nabob's revenue; nay,

more, we levied large duties upon goods brought into our districts from the very people who permitted us to trade custom free, and by numbers of impositions (framed to raise the Company's revenues some of which were ruinous to ourselves), such as taxes on marriages, provisions transferring land property, &c., caused eternal clamour and complaints against us at Court". To make matters more intolerable still, the English gave asylum in Fort William to some of the fugitives from the Nawab's justice. When Siraj-ud-daula sent a messenger to enquire about this, they arrogantly turned him 'out of the factory and off the shore with derision and insolence'. The exasperated Nawab was driven to march upon Calcutta. Taking Kasimbazar on the way, he declared: "I swear by the Great God and the prophets that, unless the English consent to fill up their ditch, raze their fortifications, and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of Nabob Jaffeer Cawn, I will not hear anything on their behalf, and will expel them totally out of my country".

Such was the provocation under which Siraj-ud-daula attacked and occupied Calcutta, on 18th-19th June 1756. Its Governor Drake and Captain-Commandant Michén and several other responsible officers, ignominiously deserted the city, whose outskirts (wherein dwelt the natives) they had earlier set on fire to prevent the Nawab's approach. Mr. J. Z. Holwell, magistrate of the native town, was left behind, with about 190 white men, to offer the last resistance. "This night saw all the houses around burning. The British soldiers now refused to obey their officers, broke open the houses of the runaway members, and made themselves drunk with the liquor found there". (Sarkar). On the 20th followed the "Black Hole" tragedy (Note at the end of this chapter) which aroused English indignation everywhere, and excited a clamour for reprisals or war to avenge the atrocity. The fugitives from Calcutta and other places gathered at Falta (on the Hugli), and suffering in the way of all such fugitives, kept up the flame of indignation until the avenging force arrived from Madras under Watson and Clive. They reached Falta on 14th December 1756, and were under the walls of Fort William on 2nd January following. Calcutta was easily retaken as the Nawab's forces made no serious resistance. Meanwhile the Seven Years' War had broken out between the English and the French in Europe, and its repercussions were immediately felt in India. In March, Clive and Watson occupied the French settlement of Chandranagore. It was described by Clive as "a large, rich, and thriving colony" whose loss was "an inexpressible blow to the French Company". In

1759, the English ruthlessly destroyed all its buildings, public and private, as they were to do in Pondicherry two years later. These two places were restored to the French in 1763, by the Treaty of Paris.

Siraj-ud-daula did not live to witness the consequences of the struggle between the English and French intruders in his province. After the recapture of Calcutta by the English, he came to terms with them, and restored all their old privileges: they were permitted to refortify the town and coin their *sicca* rupees; and were besides compensated for all their losses. Yet ominous events were happening in the country. In the very month of the retaking of Calcutta, Ahmad Shah Abdali was proclaimed in Delhi and was expected to march eastwards into Bihar and Bengal. In March, Chandranagore also fell to the English. The friendless Nawab had only enemies all round. Clive was now in the same mood that took possession of Dupleix after the French had captured Madras. He was flushed with his triumphs at Arcot and Calcutta. He openly boasted to Watts, the English Agent at Murshidabad, that he was writing to the Nawab "haughty or submissive Letters as the Occasion required." "There is nothing to choose for humbug," write Thompson and Garratt, "between his letters and the Nawab's"; "a hard dishonesty" had entered his character. To Orme, a few months later, he confessed of "Fighting tricks, chicanery, Intrigues, Politics and the Lord knows what!" The fact is that, with Drake and Watts, Clive had formed a 'Select Committee' which was in reality a *Secret Committee* in order to bring about the overthrow of Siraj-ud-daula. They entered into a conspiracy with Mir Jaffar, whereby the latter agreed to "an alliance, offensive and defensive;... the recognition of English sovereignty within the bounds of Calcutta; the grant of territories for the maintenance of a proper military force; extraordinary expenses while the troops were on campaign for the Nawab to be paid by him; and the residence at the Nawab's *darbar* of one of the Company's servants".

"I will kindle such a flame in your country as all the water in the Ganges shall not be able to extinguish", Watson warned the Nawab. Clive saw to it that that promise was kept. Mir Jaffar, Jagat Seth, and Omichand came in handy for the kindling of that flame. It was lit in the village of Plassey on 23rd June 1757, under the security of a mango grove: a mere skirmish magnified into a battle on account of its political consequences. On the English side, the casualties were no more than 65, and the Nawab lost about 500 in killed or wounded. On the eve of the engagement Clive held a 'council of war' wherein he pulled

a majority against immediate action. In the course of the fight, too, he wavered more than once. But the dash of Majors Eyre Coote and Kilpatrick, the treachery (according to plan) of Mir Jaffar, and a timely downpour which drenched the ammunition of Siraj-ud-daula (Clive had taken care to keep his powder dry in the mango grove) carried the day in favour of the conspirators. Siraj-ud-daula was taken captive and handed over to the tender mercy of Mir Jaffar, and met with the fate of Chanda Saheb in the Carnatic. Mir Jaffar was proclaimed Nawab. Clive received a reward of £2,34,000; Watts £80,000; Governor Drake £31,500; and others, each according to his 'merit'. Omichand was cleverly duped by forged documents, as is well known, under Clive's inspiration. The Company became the *zamindar* of the 24 Parganahs (lands to the south of Calcutta measuring 880 square miles) with an estimated annual rental of £1,50,000. These too were later made over to Clive as his '*jagir*'. Mir Jaffar found himself at his wits' end to meet these obligations, and applied to Clive *in forma pauperis* for assistance. "It was agreed that Clive should receive orders on the treasury of Murshidabad for twelve and a half *lakhs* of rupees; assignments on the revenues of Bardwan, Kishangarh, and Hugli for ten and a half: for the payments being due in the following April, assignments on the same districts for nineteen *lakhs*." All this was got in return for assistance in coercing Bihar into submission to Mir Jaffar. In addition, Clive also acquired for the Company the monopoly of the saltpetre trade in Bihar which was very lucrative. Mir Jaffar "was a bird in the hands of the fowler, and he agreed". When confirmation of the *Subahdari* of Mir Jaffar was obtained from Delhi the patents included the title of *Mansabdar* of 6,000 conferred upon Clive by the Mughal Emperor. For all this, Clive was indeed 'an honest man', and he confessed during his impeachment later on that he was surprised at his own "moderation"!

Before his departure for England, in February 1760, Clive had laid the foundation of British Dominion in India, by his triumphs in the Carnatic and Bengal. During the previous year he had also defeated the Dutch at Chinsura and Biderra in a "short, bloody, and decisive" war. Though Chinsura was restored to the Dutch for the time being, it was ceded to the British Government in 1825 in exchange for certain settlements in Sumatra. But Biderra, which is counted by Malleson among the fifteen decisive battles of India, proved an 'Amboyna' for the Hollanders, since they withdrew completely from Indian politics thereafter.

Plassey has found its panegyrists in all times. Although it is difficult to overestimate its political consequences, in the long run, it is difficult to understand the latest "Reflections" on its immediate results by Sir Jadunath Sarkar. The *History of Bengal* (Vol. II, published in 1948) closes with 'reflections' that cannot stand a closer scrutiny. "On the 23rd of June 1757", he says, "the middle ages of India ended and her modern age began". Further, "In the space of less than one generation, in the twenty years from Plassey to Warren Hastings (1757-1776), the land began to recover from the blight of theocratic rule. Education, literature, society, religion, man's handiwork and political life, all felt the revivifying touch of the new impetus from the west. The dry bones of a stationary oriental society began to stir, at first faintly, under the wand of a heaven-sent magician". The facts of the situation in Bengal, during the period under reference (1757-1776), however, tell a different story. The necromancer had then produced only a nightmare.

Even Vincent Smith found in that period only "a time of temptation" when the doings of men showed that they did not deserve "much esteem when alive or much regret when dead... Everybody and everything was on sale... The Company could not possibly find competent rulers either in its own ranks or among the natives of the country". It was an age 'when God and His angels slept'. "To engineer a revolution had been revealed as the most paying game in the world. A gold-lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes' and Pizarro's age filled the English mind. Bengal in particular was not to know peace again until it had been bled white". (Thompson and Garratt). Clive's place had been immediately taken by Holwell of 'Black Hole' infancy, who is described by the writers just quoted as "untruthful and unscrupulous". He was followed, in July 1760, by Vansittart who was a better man. But the situation was so bad that it might have broken the best. As Mill has described it: "The new governor found the treasury at Calcutta empty, the English troops at Patna on the very brink of mutiny, and deserting in multitudes for want of pay; the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay totally dependent upon Bengal for pecuniary resources; the provision of an investment actually suspended; the income of the Company scarcely sufficient for the current expenses of Calcutta". Still almost every factor in the service of the Company was growing rich. Even as early as 1759, Dawson, President of Fort William, received perquisites worth Rs. 20,000 against his salary of Rs. 1,600 only. When gold rusts, what should iron do? A

group of *zamindars* sent a complaint to the Council, in 1765, which stated that "the Factories of English Gentlemen are many and their Gomastahs are in all places and in every village almost throughout the Province of Bengal; they trade in Linnen, Chunam, Mustardseed, Tobacco, Turmeric, Oil, Rice, Hemp, Gunnies, Wheat, in short in all Kinds of Grain, Linnen and whatever other Commodities are produced in the Country; in order to purchase these Articles, they force their Money on the ryots, and having by these oppressive means bought their goods at a low rate, they oblige the Inhabitants and Shopkeepers to take them at an high price, exceeding what is paid in the Markets; they do not pay the Customs due to the Sircar, but are guilty of all manner of seditious and injurious acts... There is now scarce anything of worth left in the country". Warren Hastings himself wrote (in 1772): "I have been surprised to meet with several English flags flying in places which I have passed... I am sure their frequency can bode no good to the Nawab's revenues, to the quiet of the country, or the honour of our nation, but evidently tend to lessen each of them". Even as late as 11th November 1773, he complained to the Directors in London: "Among your servants, who for a course of years have been left at large in possession of so tempting a deposit, it is not to be wondered at that many have applied it to the advancement of their own fortunes... Few men are inspired with so large a share of public virtue as to sacrifice their interests, peace, and social feelings to it, and begin the work of reformation on themselves".

To the perpetrators of the revolution in Bengal, Mir Jaffar was only 'a golden sack into which they could dip their hands at pleasure', and no more. When the 'sack' was found empty, they set him aside in favour of another. Mir Jaffar was too old, naive and nerveless to resist or stand on his own legs. For the nonce, his son-in-law, Mir Kasim, was looked upon as a more paying proposition. He ascended the *masnad*, in October 1760, on the mere fiat of the English Council. For that assistance, President Vansittart received £50,000, Holwell £27,000, and other members of Council sums ranging from £10,000 to £25,000. Mir Kasim also ceded to the Company the three districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong. He quickly paid, besides, all the arrears due to the English from the old Nawab. So far all went off very smoothly. Mir Kasim was an efficient administrator: he effected necessary economies in the government departments and reorganised his army on the English model. Then came the hitch. He would not tolerate the customs abuses in his province. He prohibited

his benefactors' from trading on the privileges granted to them under specific limitations. The '*dastaks*' (permits) applied only to the transactions at the ports, and not to inland business. Besides, they were "Not Transferable"—to be used only by the *bona fide* grantees, *viz.*, the Company. They covered neither the private trade of the factors, nor their native and other proxies. This cut at the roots of the English interests: it was a challenge to the *raison d'être* of the revolution. But Mir Kasim was not willing to be a 'King Log'; he was too self-respecting a patriot to play the part of his predecessor. That was *casus belli* enough for his traducers and enemies. War therefore was inevitable between the well-meaning and capable Nawab, and the corrupt and unscrupulous servants of the Company. The foreign usurpers of the *de facto* sovereignty of Bengal would not allow the *de jure* master to set his own house in order.

They construed his military improvements as hostile preparations against the English. They challenged his officers' legitimate attempts to enforce the government regulations, and browbeat and bullied them everywhere in the province. Mir Kasim showed great forbearance, and tried to meet the situation tactically. He declared free trade for all—natives and foreigners—though that involved considerable loss of revenue for him. Yet it proved an effective economic weapon against the parasitical monopoly enjoyed by the English. Then came the proverbial 'last straw': the challenge of one Mr. Ellis at Patna. He was, as Mr. Penderel Moon has described him, "a rude overbearing man". He was the Chief of the English factories in Bihar. He claimed to be competent to decide all disputes, even between the Nawab and his subjects, "clapping even the Nawab's servants into irons, sending a detachment of the Company's troops to search the Nawab's own fort for alleged deserters", etc. Mir Kasim could no longer tolerate the "daily affronts", as Warren Hastings described them, "such as a spirit superior to that of a worm when trodden on could not have brooked". A test case made the Nawab 'cross the Rubicon'.

Ram Narain, Naib or Deputy-Governor at Patna, had been found contumacious, even by Mir Jaffar. Mir Kasim decided to remove him, but the English gave him criminal protection. Ram Narain was nevertheless dismissed and taken captive by the Nawab. This precipitated the crisis. Meanwhile the customs issue too had reached its crucial stage. Mir Kasim abolished all inland duties throughout his territories in March, 1763. The Company declared this a breach of engagement with them, though Warren Hastings

protested that "the Nawab has granted a boon to his subjects, and there are no grounds for demanding that a sovereign prince should withdraw such a boon, or for threatening him with war in the event of refusal". Mr. Ellis, however, decided otherwise, and launched a sudden attack on Patna city. The consequence was that (to use the words of Hastings) the "hoarded resentment" of the Nawab found its vent in the destruction of all "the objects of his revenge". The clash of arms which ensued from this culminated in the battle of Buxar on 23rd October 1764. It is described as "the biggest battle yet fought by the Company in India". Its victor was Hector Munro. The English lost in this fight 847 out of 857 Europeans and 7,072 Indians engaged in it. "The victory, which was absolutely decisive," writes V. A. Smith, "completed the work of Plassey." The vanquished were Mir Kasim and his allies, Shuja-ud-daula (Nawab of Oudh) and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam, who had come to the assistance of Mir Kasim since the Patna incidents. The allies were pursued up to Allahabad, but Mir Kasim escaped to Delhi where he died in obscurity. "With all his faults," writes Malleon, "he was a patriot". Shuja-ud-daula (Nawab-Wazir) and the fugitive Emperor (Shah Alam) who were 'hopeless wanderers' fell into the hands of their conquerors. That was the situation when, in May 1765, Clive returned to India as Governor of Calcutta. The terms of the peace were dictated by him. In the result, the Company ceased to be a mere trading corporation, and became in fact (though not in theory) "the most formidable republic... known to the world since the demolition of Carthage". (C. Caraccioli).

2. *From the Diwani to the Regulating Act*

The situation in the province to which Lord Clive (he had been elevated to that dignity for the 'meritorious services' already rendered by him, as witnessed above) returned was fraught with a dramatic irony to which it is difficult to find a parallel outside the field of imaginative literature. As in a good drama, the action is its own best commentary; and we shall allow it to unfold itself.

Mir Jaffar had been reinstated during the war with Mir Kasim. In the words of a contemporary Englishman, he had been treated as "a banker for the Company's servants, who could draw upon him as often and to as great an amount as they pleased." His second enthronement cost him £300,000 paid to the Company, £530,000 distributed among the Councillors, and £250,000 given to the army and navy. The poor old man also did all that was wanted of him, and restored the 'privileges' in dispute with the

previous Nawab. The only solace he needed came to him by way of his death, which occurred on the eve of Clive's arrival in May. His palace was sold by the English Council to the highest bidder, who happened to be an eighteen year old illegitimate son of the dead Nawab. Over twenty lakhs of rupees were in the process of distribution among the servants of the Company and their accomplices, when, unfortunately for them, Clive arrived on the scene.

Orders had already been issued from England prohibiting the acceptance of 'presents' by the Company's servants. The enforcement of these prohibitions and the general improvement of the entire administration were the tasks for which Lord Clive had been specially deputed this time. The noble Lord, despite his antecedents, possessed all the qualities demanded by such a peculiar mission. He was a Hercules with pretensions to be a Galahad. On his arrival he declaimed that he had come to "one of the most wicked Places in the Universe", wherein "Corruption, Licentiousness and a want of Principle seem to have possess'd the Minds of all the Civil Servants; by frequent bad Examples they have grown callous, Rapacious and Luxurious beyond Conception, and the Incapacity and Iniquity of some & the Youth of others..." He shed tears, for "Alas, how is the English name sunk! I could not avoid paying the tribute of a few tears to the departed and lost fame of the British nation." Yet Englishmen in Bengal had not forgotten that "with regard to presents in general," as Councillor Mr. Johnstone blurted out, "we have the approved example of the President, Lord Clive himself"! Nonetheless Clive argued that, in his time, 'presents' had not been prohibited by the Directors, as now. Besides, "persons in junior positions ought not to be greedy". "My grand object, you know," he declared, "is that none under the rank of field officers should have money to throw away. When they arrive at that rank, their hands are filled with such large advantages, that they may be certain of acquiring an independency in a few years." (16th February 1766). Though private trade was tabooed to the smaller fry, Clive organised a 'Society for Trade' the profits of which the higher ranks alone could share in. That body enjoyed the monopoly in salt, betel-leaf, and tobacco, and continued in operation until September 1768, 'in defiance of the Directors' repeated positive orders, and in violation of his own express undertaking to abstain from trade'. This, V. A. Smith felt constrained to declare, was "more discreditable than his early acceptance of excessive 'presents'". Mill pronounced the affair of the Society as "in its own nature shameful". "That verdict," Smith adds, "undoubtedly

tarnishes his memory and precludes the historian from according to him the unqualified admiration which his heroic qualities seem to exact." In this connection, it may be also recalled that Clive's acceptance of the 'jagir' as part of his earlier gains had evoked much jealousy. But before he accepted his fresh mission to India, he had got his right to its revenues ratified for a period of ten years. Besides this, it was discovered that Mir Jaffar, before his death, had bequeathed to Clive a legacy of Rs. 5,00,000. But Clive would not accept it under the circumstances described above. However, with the approval of his Council, he constituted that amount into a nucleus for the relief of disabled soldiers. It came to be known as 'Lord Clive's Fund'. "By a strange freak of fortune," writes Malleon, "this fund reverted, in 1858, on the transfer of India to the Crown, to the descendants of the very man who could not, or believed he could not, accept it, when bequeathed to him, for himself." Still, when all else is either forgiven or forgotten, Clive will be remembered for his acquisition of the 'Diwani' after Buxar, and his resolute action against the mutinous British officers who created a crisis for the English in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, which threatened to jeopardise all their recent gains.

These gains were the sovereign possession of Calcutta, zamindari rights over the 'Twenty-four Parganas' or Clive's 'jagir' in its vicinity, and the three districts of Burdwan, Chittagong and Midnapur got from Mir Kasim. To these was now added virtual sovereignty over the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, disguised as the 'Diwani' obtained from the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam, after Buxar. For strategic reasons, the possessions of the Nawab of Oudh were suffered to remain in his hands, subject to his being treated as a tributary, and the districts of Kora and Allahabad being assigned to Shah Alam, who was placed under British protection with a further subsidy of Rs. 26,00,000 to be paid to him annually by the British. Another such British protegee who was to play an important role in the near future was Chait Singh, the Raja of Benares, who was nominally a feudatory of the Nawab of Oudh. The 'Diwani' constituted the overall compensation for the 'merciful' treatment of the Emperor and the two Nawabs of Oudh and Bengal, etc., by the Company. We shall discuss the implications of these arrangements later. But Clive had no doubt even at this stage, that "the Company are sovereigns in India".

His handling of the crisis created by the Officers' Mutiny brought into relief the better side of Clive's character. Smith does not exaggerate when he writes: "His military

genius and his gifts for leadership were abundantly manifested both in the peninsula and in Bengal. His abilities as a statesman were exhibited chiefly in his second administration, when he confronted extraordinary difficulties with unflinching courage." Not the least formidable of these extraordinary difficulties was the fuss and fusillade caused by the 'Double Batta'. This was an allowance originally intended for men on active field service during war, but continued owing to the looseness of the administration in the period immediately preceding Clive's attempts at reform. The agitation caused by its discontinuance (under orders from the Directors), as part of the economy drive now being pursued by Clive, was an index of the demoralisation that had entered the services of the Company at that time. To paralyse the reformist efforts of Clive, most of the English officers in the army simultaneously laid down their commissions as a protest against the recent orders; threatened social boycott of those who would not join the non-co-operators; and even planned violent resistance against the authorities' taking punitive action. "Many of the Company's civil servants sympathised with the officers and subscribed in support of their cause." They contributed Rs. 1,40,000, and also helped the conspirators with copies of the Government's official proceedings. The main centres of trouble were Monghyr, Allahabad and Patna (Bankipur). Sir Robert Fletcher, Commandant at Monghyr, was one of the worst of the ringleaders. But Clive, who showed himself at his best under such circumstances, rode the storm and brought the situation under control within a fortnight, by his unflinching firmness as well as tact and sense of fairplay. He was greatly helped by the two Smiths (one Colonel and another Major) stationed at Allahabad, and the disciplined loyalty of the Indian sepoys. "Never, throughout his glorious career as a soldier, did Clive's character and his conduct stand higher," writes Malleon, "than when, in dealing out punishment for the mutiny which he, and he alone, had suppressed, he remembered the former services of the soldiers who had been led away, and gave them all, a few incorrigibles excepted, the opportunity to retrieve their characters on future fields of battle." For instance, one John Neville Parker was reinstated in 1769, and survived to render glorious service to the Company, giving his life for his master in 1781.

Clive returned to England after this, embarking on the *Britannia* on 29th January 1767, at the peak of his achievement. Like Duplex earlier, he had raised dazzling hopes among his countrymen, of their prospects in India, "and in

London there was an ignorant rush to buy the Company's stock. "The price soared, whereas it should really have fallen". The anticlimax came when the realities were brought home to the British public by the sad sequel. The immediate impression Clive made in England may be gathered from Earl Stanhope's remarks: "On the whole, it may be said that his second command was not less important for reform than his first had been for conquest. *By this the foundations, at least, of good government were securely laid...*" We shall presently see how the facts of the situation belied these anticipations. Then came the impeachment. After recounting his misdeeds and his spoils, the charge-sheet concluded: "...the said Robert Clive abused the power with which he was entrusted, to the evil example of the servants of the public, and to the dishonour and detriment of the State." "I their humble servant, the Baron of Plassey," Clive protested bitterly, "have been examined by the Select Committee more like a sheep-stealer than a member of this House", cynically adding that he was surprised at his own moderation and that he would do it all over again if he got the chance. The proceedings concluded with a certificate: "That Robert, Lord Clive, did, at the same time, render great and meritorious services to his country." On this account, some of his countrymen 'have waxed eloquent over Clive's greatness. "Like Caius Julius," writes Malleston, "he united two personalities; he was a great statesman and a great soldier. He was a man of thought as well as a man of action. No administration surpasses, in the strength of will of the administrator, in excellence of design, in thoroughness of purpose, and, as far as his masters would permit, in thoroughness of action, his second administration of Bengal."

Having noted the fruits of his generalship, it remains for us to examine the results of his 'statesmanship'. It may be at once conceded that, in his treatment of the Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh, Clive did show his 'moderation' as well as foresight. They were both precious pawns in the political game for higher stakes. For the time being, at any rate, Oudh and the new allies constituted a good buffer against further India, from which Bihar, Bengal and Orissa were well protected. But the acquisition of the "Diwani" over the latter three provinces was most unfortunate if not tragic in its consequences. It revealed the dexterity of a politician rather than the wisdom of a statesman. It was marked by a shortsighted selfishness that thought only of the profits without assuming any responsibility for good government. It was frankly and cynically a device for pocketing the spoils of Bengal, without evoking the jealousy

of others, and with a callous indifference towards the welfare and security of the subjects of the Nawab. On 24th January 1767, a document signed by Clive and his colleagues stated:

We may, in our present circumstances, be regarded as the spring which, concealed under the shadow of the Nabob's name, secretly gives motion to this vast machine of government, without offering violence to the original constitution. The increase of our own, and diminution of his power, are effected without encroachment on his prerogative. The Nabob holds in his hands, as he always did, the whole civil administration, the distribution of justice, the disposal of offices, and all those sovereign rights which constitute the essence of his dignity, and form the most convenient barrier between us and the jealousy of the other European settlements.

All this was quite true, with the qualification that the 'dignity and sovereignty' of the Nawab referred to therein were fulsome compliments paid to a dignitary who was, in private correspondence, called in plainer English, that "old fool" and that "worthless young dog"!

Before Clive cut his own throat with a pen knife, in 1774, in his own home, he had unconsciously made for conditions in Bengal wherein innumerable throats were to be 'cut' as an inevitable consequence of his 'Double Government' in that province. The great famine of 1770 which took a toll of about a third of the total population of Bengal and Bihar, was a ghastly commentary on the entire administration. Cornwallis, as late as 1789, described the affected region as "a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts". Hunter truly observed that that calamity provided "the key to the history of Bengal for the succeeding forty years". Yet the revenue for the famine year was exacted "almost in full, and added 10 per cent. for 1771". Warren Hastings stated, in 1772, that the undiminished character of the collection was due to nothing but "its being violently kept up to its former Standard". Even before the famine disclosed the skeletons in the cupboard, Mr. Becher (who had been in Bengal since 1741) observed, in 1769, "It must give pain to an Englishman to have Reason to think that since the accession of the Company to the Dewanee the condition of the people of this Country has been worse than it was before; and yet I am afraid the Fact is undoubted." The reason was frankly stated by Verelst who succeeded Clive as Governor: "Experience must convince the most prejudiced that to hold vast possessions, and yet to act on the level of mere merchants, making immediate gain our first principle; to receive an immense revenue, without

possessing an adequate protective power over the people who pay it;...are paradoxes not to be reconciled, highly injurious to our national character,...and absolutely bordering on inhumanity."

Verelst's successor, Cartier, tried to retrieve the situation as best he could. He appointed English 'Supervisors' over the native revenue-collectors who were acting under the two Naib-diwans, Muhammad Reza Khan and Sitab Rai (in Bengal and Bihar respectively). But the remedy proved worse than the disease. The 'Supervisors' turned out more rapacious than the natives they were supposed to control.⁹ Hastings substituted 'Collectors' in their places, with no better results. The graft continued. In fact its temptations were so strong to aspiring young men that they drained the Company's ranks in Calcutta where an increasing shortage of personnel was experienced. "For who would rest satisfied with a handsome salary of three or four thousand rupees a year to maintain him in Calcutta, who could get a lac or three lacs," asks Warren Hastings, "which I believe have been acquired in that space, and live at no expense, in the districts?" "Will you believe," he further exclaims, "that the boys of the service are sovereigns of the country under the unmeaning titles of supervisors, collectors of the revenue, administrators of justice, and rulers, *heavy rulers of the people?*" Whatever sins Hastings might have committed later when he was Governor-General, his work as Governor of Bengal (1772-74), deserves the highest appreciation. Unlike Clive's, his hands were not soiled by illgotten riches. He had "great ability and unblemished character". He brought to bear upon his tasks a genuine zeal and sincere desire for the well-being of the people of Bengal. Had his character remained untarnished by his elevation to the Governor-Generalship, he might have gone down in history as the noblest of the British statesmen who were ever sent to India, with the exception of Lord Ripon and Lord Mountbatten. But that deterioration was due to circumstances over which Warren Hastings had little control. He fell a victim to one of his own virtues: his independence as a man succumbed to his loyalty as a servant of the Company.

The best key to the correct understanding of Warren Hastings is found in his reply to one of Clive's characteristically patronising letters. It stated: "No man is better acquainted than your Lordship with the political interests of the Company in Bengal nor with the difficulties and embarrassments of Government. I cannot therefore wish to profit by a surrer guide than your counsel and your example. I shall adopt the principles of both and endeavour

to carry them into execution, *although in a different line from that in which a different situation of affairs required your Lordship to pursue*. It will be my study to confirm without extending the power of the Company in this country, to cultivate the arts of Peace, to establish a regular Administration of Justice, to reduce the enormous expenses of the Company to fixed bounds, and to prune them as much as possible from remote wars and foreign connections." Who can deny that he strove honestly to implement these desires, for the most part?

Vincent Smith has likened Warren Hastings to Akbar, in that he had a genius for organisation, and combined a grasp of "broad original principles with an extraordinary capacity for laborious attention to detail". He possessed a good knowledge of Persian and Bengali, as well as a working acquaintance with Urdu and Arabic, having risen from the lowest rung of the Company's service. He began as a 'Writer' and ended as Governor-General. He not only mastered every detail of his craft by his diligence, but endeared himself to the masses by his sympathetic understanding of their needs. One of his first acts on the assumption of office was the shifting of the capital from Murshidabad to Calcutta, on the very valid ground that "as the British power supports and rules the Country, that part of it where it be, from whence that power issues is the natural seat of government—to substitute any other in its stead is to surrender the rights and authority of government with it, and to lay the sure foundation of anarchy and universal rapine." The Company had now decided to "stand forth as Diwan", and Hastings assumed full responsibility for the administration in all its branches. In order to purify that administration, he withdrew the 'Supervisors' and tried to confine European control, as far as possible, to Calcutta and the districts directly held by the Company. "There is a fierceness," he remarked, "in the European manners, especially among the lower sort, which is incompatible with the gentle temper of the Bengalee, and gives the former such an ascendant as is scarce supportable even without the additional weight of authority." The Directors of the Company in England were totally ignorant of the conditions in India, and their only concern was "the entire Care and Management of the Revenues". While their servants had grown rich, so as to be the envy of all England, they themselves, i.e., the Company, were reduced to great financial straits. On 7th April 1773 they wrote to Hastings: "The expenses of your Presidency... are at length swelled to a degree we are no longer able to support". But luckily, they left many details for Hastings "to plan and execute".

The way he set about that business of execution entitles him to V. A. Smith's characterisation of Hastings as one of "the greatest of Anglo-Indian rulers".

He had "chaos itself" to be "brought into a perfect shape". He began his Herculean labours at the very top. His cleansing of the Augean stables literally commenced with the Nawab's "idle parade of elephants, menageries, etc." He reduced the Nawab's pompous pageantry which cost 32 lakhs of rupees a year, to less than 16 lakhs. He removed from office the all-powerful Reza Khan and replaced him by the more pliable Mani Begum, as guardian of the minor Nawab's "passive administration". The *subahdar* of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa thereby passed out of history, 'unwept, unhonoured, and unsung'. Hastings next turned to the *zamindars*. They were hereditary land-owners discharging the functions of feudal lords and revenue-collectors. Until then, the land revenue was arbitrarily assessed and annually collected. Todar Mall's 'bandobast' had long fallen into disuse. Hastings was anxious to arrive at a just assessment of the land's productive capacity, and to fix the revenue for a term of years, so that the *zamindars*, the cultivators and Government might know definitely what had to be paid and collected. This would also encourage them to improve their lands without the fear of too frequent exactions. For this purpose he appointed a 'Committee of Circuit', and tentatively the period of assessment was extended to five years. The Council at Calcutta was at the same time constituted into a Board of Revenue with a separate establishment of secretary, offices, etc. The Supervisors and Collectors were to be gradually replaced by Indian '*diwans*' the supervision of whose work was now entrusted to six Provincial Councils, each composed of five senior servants of the Company. Each of them was paid Rs. 3,000 a month, to keep him above temptation, and as a corrective to a practice that had proved "oppressive to the inhabitants, prejudicial to the revenue, and ruinous to the trade of the country". Likewise the '*dastaks*' which had become instruments of all-round corruption were abolished. Natives were thereby encouraged to trade more freely all over the country, the monopoly of the Company being confined only to salt and opium. In other words, as Mr. Penderel Moon has sarcastically put it, "now that the Company was in Mir Kasim's shoes it would not tolerate that which he had found intolerable". Last but not least, Hastings effected considerable economies in the civil and military expenditure, though that along with the abolition of the '*dastaks*' created much discontent and enmity towards him. Among those affected by these salu-

tary reforms were "so many sons, cousins, or eleves of Directors, and intimates of the members of Council, that it was better to let them remain than provoke an army of opponents against every act of administration, by depriving them of their emoluments". Nevertheless, Hastings made a saving of about 50 lakhs of rupees by his skilful financial administration; duties were reduced to 2½ per cent. and he was able to raise a loan in Calcutta, at 5 per cent. in 1773, instead of at the previous rate of 8 per cent. The Company's credit was thus enhanced.

"The Supervisors were the seed from which sprang the Indian Civil Service," states Mr. Moon, himself a member of that Service. "Yet from the very start," he adds, "of his term as Governor, one of Hastings' main objects was to remove them." But Mr. Moon forgets that, in Hastings' time, they were neither *Indian*, nor *Civil* (i.e., courteous), rather were they 'criminal' in their peculations and exactions, and *Servants* only in name. It was Hastings' ambition to purify the services and make them worthy instruments of a just Government. He therefore overhauled not only the *Diwani* (i.e., the Revenue and Civil departments, but also the *Nizamat* (i.e. Criminal and Police administration). The Committee of Circuit applied itself to the task of reorganising the judicial administration. The *zamindars* were divested of their judicial functions except in petty cases. A regular Civil Court was established in every District, called the *Mofussil Diwani Adalat*, and a regular Criminal Court, called the *Faujdari Adalat*. Similarly, Civil and Criminal Courts of Appeal were set up at Calcutta. With the difference that 'clearer lines' of distinction were now drawn between the civil and criminal jurisdictions, Hastings largely followed the Mughal models. For the sake of form, he obtained the Nawab's consent to the appointment of all the officers of the Criminal Court of Appeal. It was presided over by an Indian Judge, known as *Daroga Adalat*. The Civil Court of Appeal, being part of the *Diwani*, was presided over by Hastings himself assisted by two members of his Council. He took the help of Indian *maulavis* and *pundits* to interpret Islamic and Hindu laws respectively, frankly acknowledging that "the people of this country do not require our aid to furnish them with a rule for their conduct, or a standard for their property." Writing to Lord Mansfield, on 21st March 1774, he stated that he "desired to found the authority of the British Government in Bengal on its ancient laws," and to rule the people "with ease and moderation according to their own ideas, manners and prejudices". Had his successors and, indeed, the entire administration of the British

in India been inspired with that spirit, the result might have been happier, if not altogether different from what it was.

Warren Hastings has provided us with the best summary of his achievements as Governor of Bengal: "By the translation of the Calsa to Calcutta, by the exercise of the Dewanny without an intermediate agent, by the present establishment and superintendency of the Nabob's household, and by the establishment of the new courts of justice under the control of our Government, the authority of the Company is fixed in this Country without any possibility of a competition, and beyond the power of any but themselves to shake it. The Nabob is a mere name, and the seat of Government most effectually and visibly transferred from Murshidabad to Calcutta, which I do not despair of seeing the first city in Asia, if I live and am supported but a few years". The only omissions in this are the suppression of the 'Sannyasis' (who were really dacoits in the garb of a religious organisation) and the expulsion of the Bhutanese raiders, at the request of the Raja of Cooch-Bihar. Hastings personally supervised these operations and stamped out these pests by deterrant sentences on those who were brought to book. It is interesting to note that the Raja of Cooch-Bihar, in this connection, agreed to pay tribute to the Company in return for the protection he received, a precedent that was destined to grow into a system very soon. Anticipating a little history, we might cite a passage from Hastings' letter to Lord North, Prime Minister of England, dated 26th February 1775: "I am and always have been of opinion," he said, "that whatever form it may be necessary to give to the British dominion in India, nothing can so effectually contribute to perpetuate its duration as to bind the powers and states with which this Government may be united, in ties of direct dependence (on) and communication with the Crown... Their confidence would be strengthened by such a relation, and would free them from the dread of annual changes and of the influence of individuals; and their submission... would be yielded with pride by men who glory in the external show of veneration to majesty..." This was prophetic of the future. Meanwhile many were the bitter fruits of the "painful effort of a necessary policy", which we shall witness in the next few pages. A foretaste of this is found in the Rohilla War which took place before Warren Hastings became Governor-General. But because of its essential connection with the political events to be described in the next section, we shall defer its treatment a little. First of all, we shall consider the circumstances

that led to the 'Regulating Act' of 1773 and the changes brought about by it, as these changes have an important bearing on the entire history of this period.

It has been remarked above that, while the Company's servants in India were amassing enormous riches by their unscrupulous practices, their employers at home were being reduced to great financial embarrassments. In 1772, the Company was obliged to ask for a loan of £1,000,000 from the British Government. They actually got more than they had bargained for: *viz.* £1,500,000, and in addition relief from the obligation to pay to the Treasury £400,000 annually, imposed on them in 1767; but all this for a price: they were to submit their accounts half-yearly for audit by the British Government, and accept all the provisions of the 'Regulating Act', by which the affairs of the Company were sought to be regulated by the British Parliament. Apart from stipulations regarding the constitution of the Company's home Directorate, the main features of the Act relating to India were (1) the subordination of all the scattered English territories in India to the controlling authority of a Governor-General and Council (of four members) seated in Calcutta; and (2) the creation of a Supreme Court at Calcutta comprising a Chief Justice and three assistant judges (to be paid £8,000 and £6,000 each, respectively, per year), who were all to be barristers. The Governor-General and the members of his Council were to hold office for a fixed term of five years, which convention has ever since been generally followed. The salary of the Governor-General was to be £25,000 and that of each of the councillors £10,000, annual. The administrative results of these arrangements will be discussed in a later chapter. Suffice it here to note that the Regulating Act provided 'the basis of the Anglo-Indian constitution'. Politically too it constituted a great landmark in the history of modern India.

The supremacy of the Bengal Presidency over the other presidencies was definitely declared. The Governor-General and Council were to have power of superintending and controlling the government and management of the presidencies of Madras, Bombay, and Banca (in Sumatra), so far and in so much as that it should not be lawful for any Government of the minor presidencies to make any orders for commencing hostilities, or declaring or making war, against any Indian princes or powers, or for negotiating or concluding any treaty with any such prince or power without the previous consent of the Governor-General and Council, except in such cases of imminent necessity as would render it dangerous to

postpone such hostilities or treaties until the arrival of their orders, and except also in cases where special orders had been received from the Company. A president and council offending against these provisions might be suspended by order of the Governor-General and Council. The governors of the minor presidencies were to obey the order of the Governor-General and Council, and constantly and dutifully to transmit to them advice and intelligence of all transactions and matters relating to the Government, revenue or interest of the Company (V. A. Smith).

3. *First Governor-General*

The Regulating Act made Warren Hastings the First 'Governor-General of Bengal' with authority to supervise and control all the other British possessions in India, viz. the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. He continued to hold that position from 1774 to 1785 when he resigned and returned to England. The eleven years of his Governor-Generalship were memorable for the rapid extension of British influence, power and prestige, if not also territories, outside Bengal. This was the outcome of the policies pursued by Warren Hastings, as first Governor-General, in the face of difficulties created by his own councillors in Bengal and the subordinate authorities in Bombay and Madras. His differences with his colleagues, in matters relating to administration, will be considered in a later chapter. Their part in the shaping of 'foreign policy', i.e., towards the Indian powers, was incidental to the expansion of the 'shadow Empire' of the English with which we are here concerned. Technically the total responsibility for all the good and evil connected with it lay on the shoulders of the 'Governor-General and his Council'; but the real credit or discredit belonged largely to Warren Hastings, personally. He had no doubt inherited a legacy, with more evil than good in it, from which there was no escape. We have seen how, so far as internal administration was concerned, he turned the balance in favour of the good, in Bengal. Outside that province his actions and policies do not entitle him to a 'clean bill'. Great controversies raged round most of these, during his impeachment and after. He was acquitted, like Clive, and for identical reasons, viz., his services to the Nation. But there was a difference: Warren Hastings met with greater sympathy from the Company, as Clive from the Parliament: obviously the former judged Hastings in terms of the 'balance-sheet', while the latter appreciated Clive in terms of the 'balance of power'. Robert Clive was a conqueror; Warren Hastings

was a statesman. The two together, each in his own way, laid the foundation of the British Empire in India.

It cannot be gainsaid that the seeds of this Empire were sown in unclean soil. The purity of its later harvest should not blind us to the fact that the early sowers cared little about staining their hands and feet while getting on with their business. Warren Hastings' loyalty to his masters' interests made him overlook many other considerations. An eminent illustration of this is provided by his dealings with Oudh and the Rohillas. The Rohilla War and his treatment of Chait Singh of Benares, and of the Begams, revealed that, in these affairs, Hastings' 'honour rooted in dishonour stood'. The Rohilla war provides us with the link between Hastings as Governor and as Governor-General; between his internal and external policies; between his morally elevating and morally depressing actions.

Since the acquisition of the 'Diwani' in 1765, the prestige of the English had definitely increased. Not only was the Nawab of Bengal a puppet in their hands, but the Nawab of Oudh had become a dependent, with the Mughal Emperor as "a mock King, an idol of our own creation!" Warren Hastings, discarding "the unprofitable and degrading tendency of political simulation", stopped the tribute of 26 lakhs paid to Shah Alam, because he had allowed himself to be led away by the Marathas, being reinstated at Delhi by Mahadji Shinde in December 1771, and sold Kora and Allahabad back to Shuja-ud-daula for a consideration. In fact that subsidy had remained unpaid since 1770, on account of the famine. When the Imperial 'beggar' demanded the arrears, in 1772, Warren Hastings decided that "not a rupee should pass thro' the provinces (to the Emperor) till they had recovered from the distresses to which lavish payments to him had principally contributed". "If I can prevent it, ever more," he wrote to the Directors, "the same dangerous homage" shall not be rendered to that 'mock king', an idol of our own creation!... while he is the tool of the only enemies we have in India". The "claims of the Company and our Mother Country" were to have priority over all. On 12th October 1773, Warren Hastings, in a letter to Laurence Sullivan, confessed: "Such was my idea of the Company's distress at home, added to my knowledge of their wants abroad, that I should have been glad of any occasion to employ their forces which saves so much of their pay and expenses." Such an 'occasion' arose when the Nawab of Oudh (who according to Hastings "subsists on our strength entirely") demanded English assistance against his neighbours, the Rohillas.

The Rohillas were Afghans or Pathans who had settled round modern Bareilly between the upper Ganges and Gogra rivers, west of Oudh. They were hardy peasant warriors entitled to their independence as a State, as much as the Nawab of Oudh, or any other rulers in the eighteenth century. Their chieftain Hafiz Rahmat Khan governed "well and tolerantly", the majority of his subjects were Hindus, though he could not protect himself against his restless neighbours. Because of the frequent incursions of the Marathas, he was obliged to seek the assistance of the Nawab of Oudh, for love or money. The latter agreed to help in return for Rs. 40 lakhs. In 1773, the dreaded Marathas withdrew from Rohilkhand either on account of the prospect of a war with the Nawab of Oudh (who was supported by the English), or for other reasons, e.g., troubles at home caused by the murder of the Peshva Narayanrao. Nevertheless, Shuja-ud-daula demanded the stipulated compensation of Rs. 40 lakhs, which Hafiz Rahmat Khan failed to pay. Consequently the Nawab-Wazir (Shuja-ud-daula) planned a punitive campaign against the Rohillas, in concert with Hastings who readily agreed to lend the Company's troops (by the Treaty of Benares, at which the transfer of Kora and Allahabad to the Nawab was also effected), for the reasons stated above. The Nawab, in return, promised to pay to the Company Rs. 50 lakhs spread over a number of years, plus Rs. 40 lakhs immediately after victory. The projected campaign ended with the 'extermination' of the Rohillas, on 17th April 1774, when the Khan fell fighting gallantly at the battle of Miran Katra (Shahjahanpur District), and nearly 20,000 Rohillas crossed the Ganges into the territory of Zabita Khan in the west. This event was accompanied with a ruthlessness that might have been described today as 'genocide', in which the Company's British troops under Colonel Champion had no small share. We shall not enter into the controversial details of that enormity here, for its political aspects are more important than its humanitarian aspects. The task of incriminating or absolving Warren Hastings for the consequence may be left to his biographers. But the Governor-General clearly admitted: "We engaged to assist the Vizier in reducing the Rohilla country... that the boundary of his possessions might be completed, by the Ganges forming a barrier to cover them from the attacks and insults to which they were exposed by his enemies either possessing or having access to the Rohilla country. This our alliance with him, and the necessity of maintaining this alliance, so long as he or his successors shall deserve our protection, was rendered advantageous to the Com-

pany's interest, because the security of his possessions from invasion in that quarter is in fact the security of ours". Nothing could be more explicit than this. "The absence of the Marathas and the weak state of the Rohillas promised an easy conquest of them", wrote Hastings to Sullivan. It was an unprincipled act of spoliation which no sort of casuistry or rhetoric can successfully camouflage. It was more than "somewhat cynical" as Sir John Strachey was forced to admit. Though Vincent Smith found in the policy of the Rohilla war "nothing to be ashamed of", Thompson and Garratt more justly declare: "Today the Rohilla War should be beyond defence by any critic with principles." Apart from the Rohillas, whose title to that province was at least as good as that of the English to Bengal, the people too suffered by this change of masters. The rule of the Nawabs of Oudh over Rohilkhand was more inefficient, corrupt, and oppressive than that of the Rohillas.

Two other transactions of Hastings, each of which was "a sorry, sordid, and shabby business", though chronologically coming after the southern wars, may be more conveniently considered here, as pertaining to the Nawab of Oudh and as further examples of the first Governor-General's unscrupulousness in matters he regarded as financially necessary. The first of these related to Chait Singh, the Raja of Benares, and the second to the Begums of Oudh (the widow of Shuja-ud-daula, and his mother).

The arrangements of 1775 with the Nawab-Wazir included the transfer of the Raja of Benares from the suzerainty of the Nawab to that of the East India Company. Whatever might have been his status (that of '*raja*' or '*zamindar*') he had been assured that he was to pay to the Company Rs. 22½ lakhs, annually, and no more. The agreement with him, of 5th July 1775, stated that so long as he paid this amount, "no demands shall be made upon him by the Hon'ble Company, of any kind, or on any pretext whatsoever, nor shall any person be allowed to interfere with his authority, or to disturb the peace of his country". Yet Warren Hastings, in 1778, demanded from Chait Singh an additional sum of Rs. 5 lakhs, as "contribution for war expenses". When the Raja requested that he be allowed to pay in instalments, the Governor-General charged him with "contumacy" and demanded total payment within five days! He was threatened with his inability being treated as a refusal. The fact of the situation was that Hastings "was resolved to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company's distresses. In a word, I had determined to make him pay largely for his pardon or to exact a severe vengeance for his past delinquency". The

'guilt' and the 'past delinquency' were mere fictions of the Governor-General's creation. The only fault of Chait Singh was that he owned "as rich and well cultivated a territory as any district, perhaps of the same extent in India". So, in 1779, British troops were ordered to march into the 'defaulting' province, much as Frederick the Prussian had entered Silesia, thirty-nine years earlier. Chait Singh was constrained to pay £50,000 and an additional fine of £2,000 "for the expenses of the troops employed to coerce him". In 1780, the demand for five *lakhs* was again repeated. To escape this constant dunning, Chait Singh offered the Governor-General a 'present' of two *lakhs* of rupees (about (£20,000)), and Hastings accepted it. His 'requisitions' however did not stop. The five *lakhs* were exacted as before. In addition, Chait Singh was asked to furnish 2,000 troops to assist the Company in its war against the Marathas. The bewildered Raja complied immediately with half the number, and wrote to the Governor-General asking for an interview. Hastings pretended that the Raja's letter was "not only unsatisfactory in substance but offensive in style", and marched against him with an 'escort' to arrest him. Chait Singh escaped in order to save himself from the clutches of the rapacious Governor-General. But his loyal troops, infuriated by Hastings' action, fell upon the invaders and killed three English officers and a few of their sepoys. Hastings called up all available forces to his assistance and retrieved the dangerous situation in which he had rashly fallen. The army having looted what was left in the Raja's treasury (about 23 *lakhs*), "the total financial result to the Company was the cost of the hostilities that ensued." In the weighty opinion of Sir Alfred Lyall, "Hastings must bear the blame of having provoked the insurrection at Benares". The Company's Directors stigmatised the Governor-General's action as "unwarrantable and impolitic". The eleventh Report of the Select Committee of 1783 condemned it in more precise terms: "The complication of cruelty and fraud in the transaction admits of few parallels ... With £23,000 of the Raja's money in his pocket, he persecutes him to his destruction". Chait Singh was declared deposed and his nephew (who was a minor) was installed in his place, saddled with an obligation to pay Rs. 40 *lakhs* instead of the 22½ due from his uncle, annually. The new Raja was deprived of his power to coin money, as well as of his civil and criminal jurisdiction. Though Benares was an important centre of pilgrimage for the Hindus, it was placed in the charge of a Muslim City Magistrate, Ali Ibrahim Khan. It is, however, his due to record that this official made himself liked by his good

sense and integrity. Nonetheless it is necessary to point out that the overriding authority for the administration of Benares lay with the Resident, and that only aggravated the evil. When Hastings revisited the place two years later, he was "followed and fatigued by the clamours of the discontented inhabitants," as the result of "a defective if not a corrupt and oppressive administration". The "profitable rapacity" of the Benares Residency was brought to an end only by Lord Cornwallis. Until then it netted annually at least £30,000 in bribes. (Thompson and Garratt).

"Every power in India dreads a connexion with us, which they see attended with such mortifying humiliations to those who have availed themselves of it," confessed Hastings by way of revealing "the secret and sole cause of the hesitation of the Government of Berar to accept our alliance." Long before this, the fate of the Nawab of Arcot had forewarned Siraj-ud-daula and driven him to desperation. Though Oudh was ultimately swept away by the avalanche, Shuja-ud-daula too had acted cautiously and sceptically towards the English, and struggled, as far as he could, to keep the English out of his province. Under his successor, Asaf-ud-daula, the condition of Oudh came to be what it had been in Bengal in the time of Mir Jaffar. The new Nawab, "cruelly wronged at the beginning of his reign, . . . sank year by year more deeply into difficulties, from which by any ordinary means escape was now impracticable". While he was sinking in his unpaid debts to the Company, an army of its greedy servants "robbed him without scruple, by loans advanced at an exorbitant interest, and pensions and jaghires wrung from him in return". At the same time, Hastings baulked by his recent misadventure in Benares, turned to Asaf-ud-daula for the sinews of war. He was, as Thompson and Garratt have correctly described him, "lifted up with an egoism and complacency worse than those of Clive at his worst". With Hastings, rapacity seemed to grow with what it fed on. His covetous eyes now fell on the unfortunate Begums, mother and grand-mother of the Nawab of Oudh. They were in possession of rich *jagirs* and treasures. Out of these, on the recommendation of the British Resident, they had, by 1775, given to the needy Asaf-ud-daula £5,60,000 on condition that he and the Company guaranteed that no further demands should be made on them. But there was no guarantee against the breaking of honourable pledges, where 'needs of State' seemed to dictate a different course of action. Finding the Nawab too weak or reluctant to do the job, the Governor-General applied other screws. He absolved himself by denouncing the old pledges as those

given by his disloyal colleagues in the Council, and maliciously implicated the innocent old ladies in Chait Singh's revolt. Even the Court of Directors declared: "It nowhere appears from the papers at present in our possession that the Begums excited any commotions previous to the imprisonment of Chait Singh, and only armed themselves in consequence of that transaction, and it is probable that such conduct proceeded from motives of self-defence under an apprehension that they themselves might likewise be laid under unwarrantable accusations." If the accusation were well-founded, Hastings might have followed the straightforward course of demanding satisfaction from the Begums. But he chose to apply to them the proverbial logic of the wolf before the lamb. His instructions to his agents were: "You must not allow any negotiations or forbearance, but must prosecute both services (resuming their *jagirs* and seizing their treasures) until the Begums are at the entire mercy of the Nabob". When his first agent, Middleton, wrote to him, in February 1782, that "no further rigour than that which I exerted could have been used against females in this country," British detachments were marched to Fyzabad to support the Nawab's troops, and the eunuchs who acted as stewards for the Begums were "forced by imprisonment, fetters, starvation, and the threat, if not the actual infliction, of the lash to part with the hoarded treasure". (P. E. Roberts). "The employment of personal severities, under the superintendence of British officers, in order to extract money from women and eunuchs", writes even the temperate Sir Alfred Lyall, "is an ignoble kind of undertaking...conduct unworthy and indefensible." Yet, the *Oxford History* writes: "The Lords had the good sense to acquit Hastings on the charge by a majority of 23 to 6". Comment is needless. *Cui bono?* The Company and the Nawab were financially relieved, at any rate for the nonce.

Turning to western and southern India, Warren Hastings as Governor-General was called upon to tackle problems that were not of his creation. There were two inter-related wars into which the subordinate authorities at Bombay and Madras had fallen, and Warren Hastings was called upon to 'pull the chestnuts out of the fire' as best he could. "Here,...and elsewhere in India," according to *The Cambridge Shorter History of India* (p.576), "European intervention was produced not by the aggressive ambitions of the European, but by the decay of the Indian states themselves and the desire of the Indian princes for European support". An unbiassed scrutiny of the situation does not support this half-truth. Though it may be true that

India as a whole and Indian States in specific instances were decadent, in the view of modern historians, the Marathas were certainly an exception at this stage. As Lyall has described them, in Western India they were "supreme", and "everything pointed to the Marathas as destined to be the foremost rivals of the English in the impending contest for ascendancy". That was why Hastings considered them to be "our only enemies". If we recall the situation in the time of Peshva Madhavrao I, described in an earlier chapter (pp.265-66), we shall be able to assess the facts correctly. The unpatriotic invitation to the Europeans in this instance had not come unsought. It was the fruit of sedulous diplomatic cultivation by the English authorities at Bombay. The gullible Raghoba was an English nursling fed on English presents and promises. When even he would not willingly cede to the English the stronghold of Bassein and Salsette, "the first and grand object we have in view", they took it by force and then engaged themselves (by the Treaty of Surat, 6th March 1775), to support Raghoba, the murderous usurper, against the legitimate Peshva. This action was taken despite the assurance given by Mostyn to Madhavrao that, so long as he remained firm in his friendship towards the English, "they would not think of supporting or assisting either his relations or any one else against him". Nothing had happened since to justify the denunciation of that engagement. Besides, the bellicose British at Bombay launched unprovoked hostilities against Poona without previous consultation with the Governor-General (as they were required to do under the provisions of the Regulating Act). Hence their action was stigmatised by Hastings, no less than by his otherwise recalcitrant Council, as "unseasonable, impolitic, unjust and unauthorised". "The inevitable war came in anything but an inevitable manner". (Thompson and Garratt). Yet war is by its very nature such that (as Polonius advised) it can be terminated only by seeing 'that the enemy may beware of thee'.

Madhavrao I died on 18th November 1772. His brother Narayanrao was murdered, on 30th August 1773, in the interest of Raghoba. On 18th April following was born the posthumous son of the murdered Peshva, who was soon after proclaimed as Peshva Sawai Madhavrao (Madhavrao II). The guilty usurper Raghoba, having no other resource left him, flew to the English, and eventually concluded with them the Treaty of Surat, on 6th March 1775. By this the English undertook to reinstate him at the cost, to him, of 1½ lakhs of rupees per month for the maintenance of the supporting troops, jewellery worth Rs. 6 lakhs to be

deposited with the English as a pledge, and further to cede to them in perpetuity all the islands near Bombay, including Thana, Salsette, Bassein, and the *talukas* of Olpad and Jambusar near Surat. In spite of all this, however, the English ultimately found it expedient to treat Raghoba as a pretender, and came to terms with his enemies. The tortuous route by which they arrived at this conclusion may be summarised very briefly.

Mostyn was the soul of the conspiracy in support of support of Raghoba. Hornby was the Governor of Bombay under whose orders the whole affair was worked out without the cognisance of the Governor-General, until Hastings was obliged to assert himself. On first learning of the unfortunate happenings on the west coast, the Governor-General condemned the Bombay authorities in scathing terms, and peremptorily ordered the withdrawal of the Company's forces "in whatever state your affairs may be, unless their safety may be endangered by their retreat". "We hold the treaty which you have entered into with Raghoba invalid," the order declared, "and the war which you have undertaken against the Maratha State, impolitic, dangerous, unauthorised and unjust; both are contrary to the late Act of Parliament. You have imposed on yourselves the charge of conquering the whole Maratha Empire for a man who appears incapable of affording you any effectual assistance in it; . . . *nor have you the pleas either of injury sustained from the party which you have made your enemy or any prior obligation to defend the man whose cause you have espoused.*" As a corrective, therefore, an embassy was sent from Calcutta, under Colonel Upton, to treat with the legitimate Peshva's government at Poona. Upton reached his destination at the close of December 1775, and concluded the Treaty of Purandar on 1st March 1776. We may not go into the details of this treaty as it lapsed before any of its terms could be implemented, on account of events to be presently described. Its principal condition was that the English should withdraw their support from Raghoba (on whom the Maratha Government would bestow a decent pension), in return for which they were to be allowed to keep Salsette, Bassein, etc.

Upton's negotiations were so prolonged and the Bombay authorities were so intractable, that events were allowed to determine policies. Already an English force had encountered the Marathas opposed to Raghoba at Arras or Adas on the Mahi river south-west of Baroda. It was a drawn battle in which both sides fought gallantly and suffered heavy casualties. Upton who was getting impatient

at Poona was cleverly displaced by the redoubtable Mostyn under directions from Bombay. Meanwhile Bombay was also in communication with London, protesting against the inconvenient intervention of Calcutta. In the result, Hastings was caught on the horns of a dilemma: once more his loyalty to the Company got the better of his independent judgment. Pretender or no, war against "our only enemies" was to be carried on. The Directors at home had decided upon "the preservation of our honour, or the protection or safety of our possessions". Hence the alliance with Raghoba was renewed, with inevitable consequences.

The new arrangements contemplated making Raghoba only 'Regent' to the young Peshva Madhavrao Narayan (Sawai Madhavrao or Madhavrao II). This would serve to mollify the opponents of Raghoba (so at least his English patrons thought) while at the same time he would command *de facto* authority. This was to be accomplished by force of British arms. To that end an expedition comprising 500 Europeans and 2000 Indians, accompanied by Raghoba and his troops, was dispatched from Bombay under Col. Egerton, on 24th November 1778. Hastings had already sent a force under Col. Leslie, across the heart of Hindusthan, as part of a gigantic campaign, military and diplomatic, to try conclusions with the Marathas. On the diplomatic front he commissioned Alexander Elliot, who had recently arrived from England, to win over Mudhoji Bhonsle of Berar, that he might not oppose the Bengal army's passage through his territories. There were other sides to this embassy to which we shall revert later. "Elliot is gone," wrote Hastings to Impey on 20th July 1778, "on a most critical service, but likely to prove the era of a new system in the British Empire in India, if it succeeds." Bombay was a necessary and important link in the Governor-General's strategy; but, immediately, it proved one of the weakest.

The ill-conceived enterprise under Egerton ended in a disaster. It was one of the 'romantic projects' of the egregious Mr. Mostyn, who took ill at Khandala and returned to Bombay, to die there on 1st January 1779. The Governor of Bombay, as Farmer (who was in the expedition) tells us, had been "misled by the assurances of poor Mostyn", and "wanted also to engross the whole honour of this project and would not wait for the aid of Goddard". (Leslie of the Bengal expedition having died on the way, his charge was entrusted to Goddard). To cut a long story short, the Bombay expeditionary forces was cut to pieces by the Marathas at Talegaon (on the Ghats, 20 miles from Poona), on 14th January 1779. There was no help but to surrender. The capitulation, dignified as the "Convention of Wad-

gaum", was signed on 18th January by which Raghoba and two English hostages (Farmer and Stewart) were made over to Mahadji Shinde who had organised the victory for the Marathas on this historic occasion. The other terms of the surrender included the evacuation by the English of Thana, Salsette, and places in Gujarat recently taken by them, as well as the recall of the Bengal army by the Governor-General. This was too humiliating for the proud English authorities both at Bombay and Calcutta,* and they decided on the continuation of the war, repudiating the "Convention of Wadgaum". Those that had swallowed the 'camel' of Purandar were not likely to strain at the 'gnat' of Wadgaum.

Raghoba escaped from the custody of Mahadji Shinde and once more became a pawn in the English game. Mudhoji Bhonsle of Berar was bought off by Hastings with a promise to help him in his aspiration towards the Chhatrapati's *gadi* at Satara, and the gold extorted from the Raja of Benares supplemented the overtures of Elliot (above mentioned). The Nizam of Hyderabad too was detached from the Marathas, by conceding his claims on Guntur (to be explained a little later). Haidar Ali of Mysore, though united with the Marathas in a common hatred of the English, was engrossed in his struggle in the Carnatic. Fatehsingh Gaikwad made a separate treaty with Goddard on 26th January 1780 by which the English supported Fatehsingh against his brother Govindrao. They together captured Ahmedabad in the following month. A desultory war on the west coast was carried on without any decisive results for some time. The British met with a minor defeat at Panvel, but compensated themselves with the capture of Kalyan and Bassein. However, Goddard soon emulated the enterprise of Col. Egerton on Bhor Ghat and made another impressive contribution to Maratha military prestige, by this spectacular failure. Starting on 9th February from his base at Kalyan, he was struggling up the Ghats until April, when he was overwhelmed by his enemy who inflicted on him a loss of 3000 men with 19 officers killed, besides 5,000 muskets captured. On 5th May, Bombay recorded: "Such a setback was never experienced by the British before. All Bombay disparages this performance with open ridicule." Nevertheless, the balance was turned against the Marathas in Central India by the generals sent there by Warren Hastings. Popham's capture of Gwalior with the assistance of the Rana of Gohad

* The "Convention", Hastings declared, "almost made me sink with shame when I read it."

(Shinde's enemy), on August 1780, followed by Camac's success at Sironj in February 1781, with reinforcements under Muir pouring in, convinced Mahadji Shinde of the wisdom of making peace with the English. He possessed the true warrior's appreciation of others like himself. During this war Popham, Bruce, and Camac amply displayed the best soldierly qualities. On the other hand, Hastings too realised that there was a limit up to which he could go in inciting the local princes (like Gohad) against their Maratha superiors (Grant Duff). More than anything else, the finances of the English had begun to feel the strain of the prolonged war carried on, not only in western and central India, but also against Haidar Ali in the Carnatic. The greatest distress of the Bombay authorities, as Grant Duff has pointed out, "was their total want of funds. They looked to Bengal for a supply of treasure; but the hostility of Hyder...superadded to their own distress, induced the Supreme Government to declare that they could afford no assistance to the Bombay presidency". As early as 15th May, 1780, they wrote to Bombay: "Our distress for money is such that we shall be unable to make adequate remittances for the support of your Presidency, and the pay of the large army under the command of Brigadier-General Goddard." Consequently overtures for peace were made from all sides.

On 13th October 1781, Colonel Muir concluded a treaty with Mahadji Shinde, by which he agreed to recross the Jamuna, while the Maratha chief undertook to negotiate a general treaty between the other belligerents and the British Government. Already on 11th September, on the arrival of Mr. John Macpherson at Madras, a letter had been addressed to the Peshva, in the joint names of Lord Macartney, Sir Eyre Coote, Sir Edward Hughes and Mr. Macpherson, stating their wish for peace, and "assuring the Peshva, upon their own honour and that of the King, the Company, and the nation that just satisfaction should be given in a sincere and irrevocable treaty." This was brought about on 17th May 1782, at Salbai, between Mr. David Anderson, authorised agent of the East India Company, and Mahadji Shinde acting as the plenipotentiary of Nana Fadnavis, the Peshva, and the entire Maratha nation. The treaty comprised seventeen articles, the most important of which were: that the whole territory conquered since the Treaty of Purandar was to be restored; that the Gaikwad's possessions were to remain as they were before 1775; and that Raghoba was to be given a monthly allowance of Rs. 25,000. Article VI dealing with the last, stated:

The English engage that having allowed Raghunathrao

a period of four months from the time when this treaty shall become complete to fix on a place of residence, they will not, after the expiration of the said period, afford him any support, protection, or assistance, nor supply him with money for his expenses; and the Peshva on his part engages that, if Raghunathrao will voluntarily and of his own accord repair to Maharaja Madhavrao Sindia, and quietly reside with him, the sum of Rs. 25,000 per month shall be paid to him for his maintenance, and no injury whatever shall be offered to him by the Peshva or any of his people. (Grant Duff).

This treaty has been hailed by V. A. Smith as "one of the landmarks in the history of India because it assured peace with the formidable power of the Marathas for twenty years, and marked the ascendancy of the English as the controlling, although not yet the paramount government in India." So far as the Marathas were concerned, the only territorial loss they sustained was by leaving Salsette in English hands. For the rest the *status quo ante bellum* was recognised by both parties. Whether Salbai may be considered to have marked the "ascendancy of the English as the controlling power" in India is open to question. The war was the outcome of their gratuitous interference in Maratha affairs. It was an illustration of their "bid for ascendancy". If peace obtained between the Marathas and the English for twenty years following Salbai, it was not because Maratha affairs had improved, but because the English had not forgotten the lessons of the late war. In the words of Lyall, "The essence of the whole matter is that the Marathas were at this period far too strong and too well united to be shaken or overawed by such forces as the English could then afford or bring against them". And in fact, he adds, "no native power other than the Marathas did oppose any solid resistance to the spread of our dominion in upper India, until the Sikhs, long afterwards, crossed the Sutlej in 1845".

From this we shall now turn in another direction where the "energy, boldness, tenacity and resource" of Hastings—called by V. A. Smith "the Chatham of the East"—were requisitioned almost simultaneously by his "hydra-headed enemies". These enemies, it is to be remembered, were not confined to the natives of India. They included among them the French, the Dutch, and Hastings' own countrymen (even outside his Council). We may first dispose of the extra-Indian aspects of the situation. The revolt of the American colonists had involved the English in a world-wide war with France and Holland among other continental

powers, in 1778. This had its repercussions in India. There were individual Frenchmen like de Boigne, Perron, Reymond and others who were serving under Indian powers like the Marathas, the Nizam, and Haidar Ali, with none of whom the English were friendly. Nana Fadnavis at Poona and Haidar Ali in Mysore were actively canvassing for French support as a counterpoise against the English. French troops and naval detachments were already on their way to India for the defence of their settlements here. We have taken notice of the Anglo-French hostilities in this war, in the preceding chapter. All the French and Dutch possessions in India were at once occupied by the English, but restored to them by the peace settlement of 3rd September 1783 in Europe. If there had been peace in India between the English and the native powers, these events might have been dismissed as unimportant. But in the context of the Maratha and Mysore wars they attained a dangerous significance.

The Anglo-Maratha war, as we noticed above, ended with the Treaty of Salbai, in May 1782. One of its clauses enjoined upon the Marathas the task of bringing Haidar Ali into the peace settlement. But that was not easy, even for the diplomacy of Nana Fadnavis. Or, may be, the astute 'Maratha Machiavel' was deliberately procrastinating with an eye on a possible triumph of Haidar in the Carnatic, where the English were finding him a hard nut to crack. Here it is necessary to go back a little in order to understand the situation in the South created by the rise of Haidar Ali. His relations with the Marathas in the time of Madhavrao I (1761-1772) have been described before (pp.262-65).

Haidar, like most other upstarts, found himself surrounded by enemies on all sides. He had to stabilise himself on the throne of Mysore, on the one hand, and meet external dangers at the same time on the other. On both these fronts, he very soon discovered that the English were his worst enemies. On the contrary, the French appeared friendly towards him right from the beginning of his usurpation. The Anglo-French struggle in the Carnatic only served to add fuel to the fire of antagonism between Haidar and the English, since Pondicherry was in league with Mysore. With the fall of the French capital, many Frenchmen found service under Haidar Ali. Besides, the rivals of Muhammad Ali (Nawab of Arcot) received protection and support in Mysore. The English and the Nawab of Arcot, therefore, became common enemies of Haidar. Their relations were further aggravated by the 'pestilen-

tial' conditions obtaining in the Carnatic and Madras at this time.

Bengal was a paradise of angels compared with the hell that was reigning on the Coromandel coast. In the words of V. A. Smith, "The Madras government was torn by internal dissensions and saturated with corruption". As a result of this, Governor Lord Pigot was kept in unlawful confinement by his own Councillors, and died a prisoner. Sir Thomas Rumbold who succeeded Pigot made things easy for others as well as himself by joining the parasites in their profitable enterprises. The Nawab of Arcot was no better than his patrons. He was incited by his English friends to launch upon aggressive adventures against his neighbours that he might find the wherewithal to pay the extortionate interest (36-48%) on the loans advanced by them, against assignments of land. In 1773, the Madras authorities subdued and deposed the Raja of Tanjore, with whom they had no quarrel, in order "to oblige Muhammad Ali". "These open scandals and constant changes in the government," writes P. E. Roberts, "naturally resulted in an inconsistent and chaotic policy which soon entangled the Presidency in the war already raging on the western side of India."

Two wars were fought between the English and Haidar Ali: the First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69), and the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84). The causes and consequences of these wars are more important for us than the military events which marked their course. Haidar would have remained friendly with the British but for their supporting his enemies. They first gave him umbrage by their duplicity, soon after his usurpation. They were negotiating with the 'King's party' through Captain Richard Smith who was instructed by Madras to make proposals "either to the King of Mysore or to Haidar as from circumstances shall appear to him best to serve the present purpose without concluding any definite treaty which is always to be referred to our approval and determination". Later, during Haidar's war with the Marathas, the Bombay authorities supplied him with arms, because of the trade facilities he afforded them on the west coast. But Madras drifted into an alliance with the Nizam, in November 1766, and sent British troops to assist him in his encroachments on Haidar's dominions. However, the Nizam betrayed the English and joined Haidar. The war which ensued brought no particular advantage to either side, though it ended with a treaty directed by Haidar at the gates of Madras, on 29th March 1769, by which there was a restitution of places conquered by each side. "It cannot be denied," writes Bowring, "that,

both in regard to military operations which preceded this treaty and to the conditions which it embodied (of mutual assistance in a defensive war), the Mysore chief evinced high qualities as a tactician and the sagacity of a born diplomatist. On the other hand, the proceedings of the Madras Government were characterised by a mixture of rashness and irresolution, and an absurd confidence in their treacherous ally Muhammad Ali, of whose duplicity Haidar had, on the contrary, formed an accurate estimate."

The Second Anglo-Mysore War started from the failure of the English to render assistance to Haidar during the Maratha invasion of his country under Madhavrao I, as they had undertaken to do by the treaty of 1769. Being confronted with a 'Hobson's choice' they chose to "temporise with both (Haidar and the Marathas) in the best manner we are able". On the other hand they took Haidar to task for his attack on Murarirao of Gooty, describing him as "our friend and ally who was included in the treaty of 1769". Again, in ostensible support of their protege, Basalat Jang (brother of the Nizam), they marched their troops to Adoni and Kadappa, through Haidar's territory without asking for his permission. On the outbreak of hostilities with the French, they launched an attack on the port of Mahe, on the Malabar coast, which too was under Haidar's protection, and occupied it on 19th March 1779. Haidar therefore felt compelled to throw in his lot with the French. To make matters worse for themselves, the Madras authorities drove the Nizam into the arms of Haidar and the French, by their precipitate haste to occupy Guntur. That district was part of the Northern Sarkars which were assigned to the British, when Col. Forde ejected Bussy from the Godavari valley; but by treaty arrangement with the Nizam it was to come into English possession only after the death of Basalat Jang. Yet, in 1779, they persuaded Basalat to part with it, without reference to the Nizam. At the same time, Governor Rumbold of Madras foolishly asked the Nizam to remit the tribute due to him on account of the Northern Sarkars. The infuriated Nizam consequently needed little persuasion to make common cause with the enemies of the English. These events having synchronised with the Anglo-Maratha war on the western side, they inevitably led to a formidable combination, being formed between the Marathas, the Nizam, and Haidar Ali, against their common foe the English, who were already at war with the French since 1778. "By the summer of 1780," writes Lyall, "the fortunes of the English in India had fallen to their lowest watermark." Hastings was hard put to it to finance this hydra-headed conflict: "the two Presi-

dencies depended almost entirely on Bengal for money"; not only for money but also for brains to plan the strategy, and for men as well as materials to execute it successfully. When the crisis was passed, Hastings with Ciceronian pride truly declared: "I have been the instrument of saving one Presidency from infamy and both from annihilation".

We cannot find space to describe all the details of the grand achievement of the Governor-General. All that we can do is to give an account adequate enough to exhibit its significance. The one-sided horrors of the war, which ensued in the manner described above, have often been cited by historians in the colourful language of Burke. "Revolutions," Nizam-ul-Mulk once declared, "are not made with rose-water." Haidar, not without provocation in this case, "raged through the Carnatic with fire and sword." French troops were *en route* to India to join him. The treasury at Madras was empty, and the army in the English service was demoralised. That nest of corruption and dissension was without defensive plans. Haidar had little difficulty in annihilating a detachment of about 3,000 men under Col. Baillie, while it was trying to join the main army under Sir Hector Munro, the victor of Buxar. Shaken by this unexpected disaster, Munro lost nerve and, throwing his guns and stores into a tank, retreated in panic to Madras. It was at this juncture that Hastings sent Sir Eyre Coote, the hero of Wandewash, to the rescue post haste from Bengal, by sea, with the flower of the Bengal army, adequate supplies and 15 *lakhs* of rupees. At the same time, Colonel Pearse was dispatched with a force of 5,000 men, through Orissa and the Northern Sarkars, as a reinforcement. It was in this connection that Hastings neutralised the Raja of Berar, detaching him from the 'confederacy' of the Marathas, Nizam and Haidar, by "skilful diplomacy sweetened by a *douceur* of sixteen lakhs". He also won over the Nizam by conceding his claims regarding Guntur. Thus fortified on all sides, with full command being vested in Sir Eyre Coote, with reinforcements under Pearse, and finance and supplies managed by the Central Government at Calcutta, the tables were soon turned against Haidar Ali. He was successively defeated at Porto Novo, Pollilore, and Sholinghur, in the course of the three months of July, August and September, 1781. The arrival of the French forces under Admiral Suffren—with hopes of further reinforcements under de Bussy—though looking formidable at the time, did not affect the ultimate result. The surrender of Braithwaite at Tanjore, in February 1782, was counter-balanced by Pearse's victory at Arni in the June following. The real contest, however, was waged on the sea and round

Cuddalore, between Suffren and Hughes, which has been described in another place. Its outcome is best expressed in the words of Haidar Ali himself, who confessed: "I can ruin their resources by land, but I cannot dry up the sea". Haidar died in December 1782, and was followed by Coote soon after. Peace was restored between the English and the French by the Treaty of Versailles, news of which arrived in India in June, 1783. The Marathas had already signed the Treaty of Salbai a year earlier. Only Tipu Sultan, Haidar Ali's son and successor, persevered in his hostilities with the English on the west coast. But he too, fighting single-handed, came to terms in the Treaty of Mangalore, signed on 11th March 1784. As it was based on the mutual restitution of conquests, the war with Mysore concluded as fruitlessly as the one with the Marathas.

The arrival of Lord Macartney, as Governor of Madras, had hastened the pace of the coming peace. Hastings who was dissatisfied with the result exclaimed: "What a man is this Lord Macartney! I yet believe that, in spite of the peace, he will effect the loss of the Carnatic." Hastings was himself impeached on several counts, after his return to England in January 1785. We need not recount the charges here, nor review the literature that came out of the impeachment. Warren Hastings was universally appreciated as a statesman, admired for his qualities as a man of boundless energy and resource, praised for his loyal services to his Company and country, but condemned on moral grounds. That others were worse than he could be no defence worthy of rational acceptance. Though we may not share the glow of admiration with which V. A. Smith compared him to the 'Happy Warrior', we need not grudge the critical praise bestowed upon him by Mill: "In point of ability, he is beyond all question the most eminent of the chief rulers whom the Company ever employed." By far the best commentary on Warren Hastings, however, is afforded by his own personal revelations in his letters to friends. Without any exaggeration he claimed: "I have sustained during thirteen years with a perseverance against a succession of difficulties which might have overcome the constancy of an abler mind, of being in some period of time, however remote, allowed to possess and exercise the full powers of my station, of which I had hitherto held little more than the name and responsibility; and to see with it the belief, which I had so fondly indulged, that I should become the instrument of raising the British name, and the substantial worth of its possessions in India, to a degree of prosperity proportioned to such a trust." Concerning Bengal which was the main seat of his direct labours, he

wrote: "I am morally certain that the resources of this country, in the hands of a military people and in the disposition of a consistent and undivided form of Government, are both capable of vast internal improvement and of raising that power which possesses them to the dominion of all India." This, however, he added, "is what I never wish to see." In a letter to the Marquis of Hastings, in 1812, he observed, "Among the natives of India there are men of as strong intellect, as sound integrity, and as honourable feelings as any of this Kingdom. I regret that they are not sufficiently noticed, sufficiently employed nor respected so much as they deserve to be. Be it your Lordship's care (forgive my good Lord, this imperative style) to lessen this distance: be their especial Patron, friend and protector, and by your example make it the fashion among our countrymen to treat with courtesy and as participators in the same equal rights of society with themselves in all cases not excepted by the institutions of legal authority."

It is apparent from the above that the first Governor-General, called to the helm of affairs of a Company of traders just become rulers over a people so unlike themselves in most respects, had aspirations, instinctive perceptions, and a genuine good will towards the governed, which reveal to us his qualities of statesmanship, despite the crimes of his statecraft. He was loved by the people of Bengal, and he deserves to be remembered by all Indians because of the service he rendered to Indology. We shall assess this last service in another chapter.

The Regulating Act of 1773 had revealed several defects in its working. Warren Hastings' work was greatly hampered by these shortcomings. We shall review them critically in another place (Chapter XV). Before he relinquished his Governor-Generalship, another Act, Pitt's India Act, was promulgated in 1784. Among other things it definitely strengthened the hands of the Governor-General, and thereby facilitated the work of the successors of Warren Hastings. "God forbid", Warren Hastings declared, "that the Government of this fine country should continue to be a mere chair for a triennial succession of indigent adventurers to sit and hatch private fortunes in." Better times were definitely coming.

The new Act created a Board of Control in England to regulate what the 'Regulating Act' had failed to regulate successfully. It empowered the Board, "from time to time, to check, superintend, and control all acts, operations and concerns which in any wise relate to the civil or military government or revenues of the territories and possessions of the said United Company in the East Indies". At the

same time, it declared, "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and policy of this nation." In pursuance of this policy it clearly laid it down that:

It should not be lawful for the Governor-General and his Council, without the express authority and consent of the Court of Directors, or of the Secret Committee, to declare war, or commence hostilities, or enter into any treaty for making war, against any of the country princes or States in India, or any treaty for guaranteeing the possession of any country prince or State, except where hostilities had actually been commenced, or preparations actually made for the commencement of hostilities, against the British nation in India, or against some of the princes or States who were dependent thereon, or whose territories were guaranteed by any existing treaty.

NOTE: THE 'BLACK HOLE' OF CALCUTTA

This incident has been given an exaggerated prominence by most Anglo-Indian historians, far beyond its merit. We touch upon it here merely to clarify the actual position. Siraj-ud-daula was provoked to an attack on Calcutta in June 1756, with the result described in the text. All the responsible English officers, including Governor Drake, having fled, Holwell was left behind to make a last defence, together with a small force not exceeding 190 Europeans. Holwell too would have embarked if he could, but he was unable to do so. Finally, on the 20th afternoon, they capitulated, and about 146 of them came to be packed into a prison cell (about 18 feet square). On the next morning only 23 of these unfortunate prisoners of war were found alive—Mr. Holwell and one Mrs. Carey were among the survivors. The Nawab himself was ignorant of what had happened, and is not blamed for the tragedy. Some allege that he was callous towards the survivors. Thompson and Garratt speak of his "confused feelings of pity" (p.85). The real responsibility is foisted on Omichand, whom Drake had imprisoned and Holwell "forgot to free"—"a circumstance which, in the heat and hurry of action, never once occurred to me (Holwell), or I had certainly done it, *because I thought his imprisonment unjust*". This was the very Omichand later on betrayed by Clive's forgery. Holwell who succeeded Clive, according to Thompson and Garratt, "never forgot or forgave his Black Hole sufferings. Apart from this, he was untruthful and unscrupulous". (p.99). It is on the evidence of this man that the harrowing details rest. Sir Jadunath Sarkar has critically examined these, circumstantially as well as on grounds of authority,

and suggested that perhaps not more than about 60 were put into the prison. 56 names are supplied by Hill, "to which Lord Curzon added the names of some who had been killed in fighting". In that confused and chaotic situation, all those who could not be otherwise accounted for were supposed to have perished in the 'Black Hole'. Mrs. Carey was the only white woman, according to Sarkar, who was among the prisoners, and she came out alive. According to Hill (I,xcvii), "all the white women and children of Calcutta were on board the ships that escaped" to Fulta. V. A. Smith, however, asserts: "But it is indispensable to observe that recent attempts to discredit the story as an invention are not well founded. The incident certainly occurred, *although some uncertainty may exist concerning one or other detail*". Yet he avers that "there is good reason for believing that the prisoners confined included *several women* of whom only one survived." *The Cambridge Shorter History* more cautiously concludes: "This event does not deserve the title of 'massacre' by which it has long been known, for there is nothing to show that the fate of the prisoners was in any way designed. But neither does there appear ground for discrediting the evidence of more than one survivor or for supposing that no such incident occurred."

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

EXPANSION OF BRITISH DOMINION

1. *Introduction*. 2. *The 'Ring Fence'*. 3. *'Subordinate Isolation'*.
4. *'Subordinate Union'*. 5. *'Non-Intervention'*.

F. Introduction

HAVING witnessed the transformation of a Company of traders into a semi-political body of rulers, it remains for us to trace the consequences of that metamorphosis. It is convenient to study the results in two parts: (i) territorial expansion, and (ii) administrative improvements. Reserving the latter to the next chapter, we shall concern ourselves here with the stages and character of the growth of British Dominion in India since Warren Hastings' retirement.

The most striking feature of the period that followed, from 1785 to 1857, is what Sir John Marriott has described as "the proverbial irony of History". Never was the course of events more ironical, he says, than during the seventy-three years which intervened between the passing of Pitt's India Bill and the outbreak of the 'Mutiny'. The 'irony' consisted not so much in traders having become rulers, as in the rapid expansion of British dominion following close upon the passing of a law which appeared to declare unequivocally against it. In 1767 the Directors of the East India Company had laid down that "the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa are the utmost limits of our view on that side of India. On the coast the protection of the Carnatic and the possession of the Sircars...and on the Bombay side the dependencies thereon with Salsette, Bassein and the Castle of Surat. If we pass these bounds, we shall be led from one acquisition to another until we shall find no security but the subjection of the whole, which by dividing your force would lose us the whole, and end in our extirpation from Hindustan". In 1784, Parliament declared that "the pursuit of schemes of conquest is repugnant to the wish, to the honour and policy of the British nation". Nonetheless, as Lyall pointed out, in 1894, "For the last hundred years every important annexation in India has been made under the sanction and the deliberate orders of the national government of England." This was carried out by "a distinguished line of Parliamentary proconsuls and generals". The most important among the 'Increasers of the Empire', according to Seeley, were Lord Clive, the founder, Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings and Lord Dalhousie: "Roughly

it may be said that the first established us along the Eastern Coast from Calcutta to Madras; the second and third overthrew the Maratha power and established us as lords of the middle country and of the western side of the peninsula; and the fourth, besides consolidating these conquests, gave us the north-west and carried our frontier to the Indus". With the appearance of Lord Wellesley as Governor-General in 1798, Seeley adds, "a new era begins in Indian policy. He first laid down the theory of intervention and annexation. His theory was afterwards adopted by Lord Hastings, who, by the way, before he became Governor-General had opposed it. Later again it was adopted with a kind of fanaticism by the last of the Governors-General who ruled in the time of the Company, Lord Dalhousie".

In the survey of this period of Imperial expansion we might take note of the division into three epochs suggested by Lee-Warner: *viz.* (i) The 'Ring Fence', (ii) 'Subordinate Isolation', and (iii) 'Subordinate Union'. The first, according to Lee-Warner, closed in 1813, and the second in 1857. The last relates to the ultimate policy towards the Indian States and may be reserved for later consideration. During the first of these phases, the Indian powers were merely fenced off from the British possessions, but regarded as 'independent States'; they were free to pursue their own internal and external policies without British intervention. During the second phase, though their isolation continued to be the common feature, the princes were brought under British control in their foreign relations, but were still free in internal matters. In the third phase, their autonomy was strictly limited by the 'Paramountcy' of the Imperial power which held the rulers of States responsible to itself even as regards the management of their domestic affairs. The chronological divisions suggested above, however, may not be rigidly followed. But the distinctions made are helpful in understanding the stages or phases in the assimilation of "Indian India" in the British Empire.

It is to be borne in mind that no policy was adhered to strictly by the British at any stage or time. They were sometimes aggressive and at other times 'non-interventionists', but never wedded to either of these policies consistently. Governors-General who came out to India with a mandate or avowed intention to follow a peaceful policy—like Cornwallis, Wellesley and Hastings—turned out to be the greatest protagonists of the 'forward policy' in action, once they were in 'the maelstrom of Indian politics'. Even those who were supposed to be 'non-interventionists' to a fault, like Sir John Shore and Sir George Barlow, made exceptions to their 'politic passivity' by active intervention

under circumstances we shall examine more closely in another section. Sir Thomas Munro very frankly and correctly declared on the eve of the war against Tipu Sultan:

The unity of our Government and our great military force give us such a superiority over the native princes, that we might, by watching opportunities, extend our dominion without much danger or expense, and at no very distant period, over a great part of the Peninsula. Our first care ought to be directed to the total subversion of Tippoo. After becoming master of Seringapatam, we should find no great difficulty in advancing to the Kistna, when favoured by wars or revolutions in the neighbouring States. But we ought to have some preconceived general scheme to follow upon such occasions.

2. The 'Ring Fence'

During the first period of British territorial expansion, 1765-1813, according to Sir William Lee-Warner, "The Company was barely struggling for its existence, and it recoiled from the expense and the danger of extending its treaties of alliance and self-defence beyond the ring-fence of its own territorial acquisitions. In the next period, which lasted from 1814 to the Mutiny of 1857, larger schemes of Empire dawned upon its horizon and dominated the policy of its Governors-General". Before 1765, the Company had acquired a dominating hold over the Nawab of the Carnatic, and become tributary to the Nizam for the Northern Sarkars excluding Guntur. But the sovereign rights over these tracts still belonged to the Mughal Emperor in theory, and in a more real sense to the Nawab and the Nizam, respectively. This was legally established by the Chancery which, in 1793, declared that the Nawab of Arcot was "sovereign" and "consequently is not a subject of private municipal jurisdiction". The Nizam too was an independent ally in "reciprocal agreement" and "mutual alliance" with the British. Similar was the status of the Nawab of Oudh since Buxar, whose territories acted as a convenient buffer against the Marathas. So long as the Company held only the *Diwani* in a limited sense, the Nawab of Bengal also, in theory, was the master of that province. But, as we witnessed in the last chapter, the British very soon managed to 'liquidate' the condominium and made themselves virtual 'sovereigns' in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, owning nominal allegiance for a time to the Mughal Emperor directly. The next real territorial extension made by the British was the result of the war with Tipu Sultan (Third Anglo-Mysore War: 1790-92) which

ended with the Treaty of Seringapatam (18th March 1792).

The ostensible excuse for this war was Tipu's attack on Travancore in December 1789. Summarily stated, as most British historians have conveniently done, that invasion seemed to justify the English claim that they were obliged by 'treaty obligations' with Travancore to enter upon a defensive war with the 'aggressive' ruler of Mysore. Cornwallis described it to Henry Dundas as "an absolute and cruel necessity". But a closer examination of the circumstances on the eve of this war reveals a slightly different character. Cornwallis' defence of his action in this context is correctly described by P. E. Roberts as "a rather desperate piece of casuistry". From the point of view of 'Indian India', the Governor-General cannot be absolved from the entire responsibility by blaming it on the recalcitrance of the subordinate authorities. If credit for the ultimate achievement is given to Cornwallis, the discredit of the preliminaries ought not to be dissociated from him. Pitt's India Act had created a single and undivided authority in India for acts of peace and war with the native powers. There was only one English Company in India and all its responsible officers acted in its name. If any one of them failed to honour 'treaty engagements' with any of the Indian powers, the blame belonged to the English Company as a whole and not only to its defaulting servants. The fact about the Anglo-Travancore alliance was that, while the Maharaja had meticulously carried out every obligation under the engagement with the English, the Madras authorities criminally failed to discharge their commitments in Travancore. When Tipu invaded Travancore and the Maharaja asked for support from the English, Mr. Hollond (Governor of Madras), far from sending assistance, advised the Maharaja "to abstain from every act that might antagonise Tipu". "The behaviour of Governor Hollond", observes the official historian of Travancore, "was little short of being criminal. There was little doubt that he expected to receive large sums from the Maharaja in return for the British support claimed by Travancore. It was evident that the only means of extortion was to keep the British force in such an inefficient state as to encourage Tipu to terrify Travancore". There were British forces at hand, but they did not help. Travancore was obliged to make the best of a desperate situation and succeeded in throwing back the forces of Tipu unaided. Yet, when the war with Tipu was continued by the British outside Travancore and for their own reasons, Travancore helped them with men and money. Nevertheless, when Tipu was defeated and compelled to yield half his territory, in

addition to a heavy cash indemnity, the spoils were divided between the English and their other allies, the Nizam and the Marathas, excluding Travancore from any share in the gains. On the contrary, Travancore was asked to contribute several *lakhs* towards the war expenses! It must be remembered, however, to the credit of Cornwallis, that he totally disapproved of the conduct of the Madras Governor and scathingly condemned his delinquency. He wrote:

I think the late Government of Fort St. George were guilty of a most criminal disobedience of the clear and explicit orders of this Government, dated the 29th August and 13th November, by not considering themselves at war with Tippoo from the moment that they heard of his attack. . . I still more sincerely lament the disgraceful sacrifice which you have made by that delay of the honour of your country, by tamely suffering an insolent and cruel enemy to overwhelm the dominions of the Raja of Travancore, which we were bound by the most sacred ties of friendship and good faith to defend. This lament, however sincere, and the action confirming its genuineness, were unfortunately *post facto* events of little consequence to Travancore.

The Third Anglo-Mysore War was a necessary sequel to the unfinished struggle between the English and the Sultan of Mysore. Munro's reading of the situation cited above presents the case in its true light. Haidar Ali had bequeathed to his more implacable son the legacy of an ambition to eliminate the English totally or to get eliminated in the attempt. Tipu, less adroit and more rash in his character than his father, not merely forfeited the balance in favour of Mysore which Haidar had achieved, but fatally played into the hands of his enemies. Haidar had well nigh succeeded in uniting all his Indian rivals in a common endeavour to oust the English. Tipu alienated all of them by his impatience, religious fanaticism, and lack of diplomatic skill. Travancore, Coorg, and the Marathas were antagonised by Tipu's fanatical zeal, while the Nizam was alienated by his imprudent demand for a bride from the Subahdar's house. Cornwallis exploited all these mistakes to his own advantage. He decided to support the preposterous claims of the Nizam over Mysore territory, in violation of the treaties of 1768 and 1784. "He adopted," writes Roberts, "the extraordinary expedient of writing a letter to the Nizam, explanatory of the treaty of 1768, which declared that, if the districts claimed by the Nizam should ever come into the possession of the British, they should be handed over to him; troops were to be supplied to the Nizam but were not to be employed against any powers in

alliance with the British; a list of these powers was added and *the name of Tipu was deliberately excluded.*" The Marathas were also drawn into the alliance, because Tipu had lately made a wanton attack on the Desai of Nargund and perpetrated atrocities for which they were seeking vengeance. Coorg, too, came in because of a similar condition. Travancore, therefore, only provided a much desired excuse.

When Tipu was forced to retreat precipitately from Travancore, by the heroism of Diwan Keshava Pillai and his brave warriors, he was confronted by the British armies that had by then begun to move against him. But the campaign organised and led by General Medows (Governor of Madras) did not go well for the English. "The Mysore sovereign," observes Bowring, "may be said in this campaign to have shown greater skill in strategy than the English general who was opposed to him. But destiny had declared against him". On the west coast, Col. Hartley and General Abercromby (Governor of Bombay who had landed at Tellicherry) carried all before them. Meanwhile, Cornwallis arrived at Madras, in January 1791, and planned to march against Bangalore and Seringapatam (Tipu's capital). The Nizam and the Marathas were, at the same time, expected to converge on the same point. Tipu had thus no option but to fall back into his capital. Before the campaign ended, with the submission of the 'Tiger of Mysore' in March 1792, Cornwallis had occupied Bangalore, and the Marathas devastated Tipu's territories in the north-west. Although Cornwallis' first sallies towards Seringapatam met with the misfortunes experienced by Hector Munro earlier near Madras (he had to bury his guns, throw his ammunition into a tank, and retreat), he ultimately succeeded in closing in upon his central target. The timely assistance of the Marathas, the Nizam, and the Bombay troops, no less than those of the hostile Coorgs, at a critical juncture, contributed not a little to the success of the Governor-General. Tipu was constrained to save himself for the time being by ceding half his territories to the victors, and paying 330 *lakhs* of rupees as indemnity, besides releasing all the English prisoners in his cells and surrendering two of his sons as hostages. These last were restored to their father in 1794. A third son of Tipu, Prince Ghulam Muhammad, later settled down in the neighbourhood of Alipur (Calcutta). "Many Englishmen have a pleasant recollection of the old Prince's hospitality; his entertainment of Viceroys at his residence; and his black horse with a long tail that swept the ground, as he took

his leisurely morning canter round the race-course of Calcutta."

The territorial distribution according to the Treaty of Seringapatam (18th March 1792) comprised the cession of the districts north of the Tungabhadra (western side) to the Marathas, and on the eastern side down to Kadappa (inclusive) to the Nizam. But the British were the greatest gainers. Coorg which was of great strategic importance became a Protectorate; Dindigal (Madura District) and Baramahal and Rayakottai (Salem District) constituted an 'iron boundary for Coromandel'. V. A. Smith has pointed out that the districts left to Tipu were 'rugged and unproductive' in comparison with those of which he was deprived. "It must be admitted," writes Bowring, "that, so far as the English Government were concerned, he (Tipu) faithfully discharged his obligations." The British annexations under the treaty largely extended the area of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. Cornwallis was rewarded for this achievement by promotion to the rank of Marquess. But General Medows was dissatisfied with the result, so far as Tipu was concerned: he would have liked to depose him in favour of the original Hindu Prince. Mr. Sullivan, the English Resident at Tanjore, "sought to forward the views of his Government" by intriguing with the old royal family with a view to its restoration. In this, combined with the rankling caused by the recent amputations of his territories, Tipu Sultan, if he needed any incitements, had enough provocation for further hostility towards the English.

3. *'Subordinate Isolation'*

The explosive combination of hatred and ambition was not confined to Tipu Sultan alone. The next great British proconsul to come out to India was a serious rival, in this respect, to the restless 'Tiger of Mysore'. "In plain words," writes Sir Alfred Lyall, "Lord Wellesley, to whom restless ambition was in Asiatics a thing intolerable, had already resolved to extend the British Protectorate over all the rulerships with which the English Government then had any connexion, by insisting that each ruler should reduce his army, and should rely for external defence and internal security mainly upon the paramount military strength of the British sovereignty." His accomplishment of this objective—which is the subject of our study in the present section—is the real beginning of the period of 'Subordinate Isolation', and not 1813 as suggested by Lee-Warner. At the close of his regime (1798-1805) the British House of Commons recorded in a Resolution: "He has established on

a basis of permanent security the tranquillity and prosperity of the British Empire in India". The Imperial note sounded here, for the first time, emphasises very clearly that the British in India had by now superceded all the Indian powers in paramouncy. When Wellesley (then Lord Mornington) arrived in India (April 1798), the Marathas were still supreme in the Deccan and North India, while Tipu Sultan occupied a similar position in the South. When Wellesley left, in 1805, Tipu was dead, and Mysore had been reduced to a dependency; the Peshva had surrendered to the English, and the other Maratha chiefs were all but finally reduced to total subjection. These results were brought about by the deliberate pursuit of the 'forward' policy in spite of protestations to the contrary by Lord Mornington and writers like Lee-Warner. Their efforts to prove that all this was achieved in "strict conformity with Pitt's India Act and subsequent legislation renewing the prohibition against ambitious designs", says V. A. Smith, "are not convincing."

Wellesley's actions have been justified from their results. We shall in another place discuss the beneficial results of the British conquest of India. But to argue from the results to the aims is to put the cart before the horse: to justify the means by the ends. This is unhistorical. Tipu was described by Cornwallis as a "mad barbarian". Wellesley was convinced that sooner or later Tipu would take the offensive against the English whom he denounced as "oppressors of the human race". There could be little doubt that Wellesley acted with foresight and vigour to forestall his enemy. Yet to blame Tipu entirely for making the last Anglo-Mysore war "inevitable", and to call him an unmitigated savage, is no better than giving the proverbial 'dog' a bad name. Even Lyall speaks of Tipu as "a fierce, fanatic, and ignorant Mahomedan". Fierce and fanatical Tipu was, undoubtedly, but not *ignorant*. With all his faults, he possessed a valuable library (which was removed to Calcutta after his overthrow), spoke Persian, Urdu, and Kannada fluently, and as V. A. Smith has observed, "worked hard at the business of administration and wrote instructions on all subjects' civil and military". Towards the end of 1797, writes Sir John Marriott, "with statesman-like grasp of the world-situation", he dispatched a mission to Mauritius to propose an alliance with the French Republic "for the expulsion of the English from India". The miscarriage of that project cannot justify the ridicule heaped upon its author by some writers, for a step which encouraged even Bonaparte and Talleyrand. "This also", observed Tallyrand, "offers us a chance of driving the

English out of India by sending thither 15,000 troops from Cairo *via* Suez." But most historians have the incorrigible habit of being bigoted worshippers at the shrines of the successful. In their eyes there is no greater crime than failure. Nevertheless, there have been a few 'heretics' who have not failed to give the devil his due. James Mill, for example, wrote on Tipu's government:

As a domestic ruler he sustains an advantageous comparison with the greatest prince of the East... He had the discernment to perceive, what is generally hid from the eyes of rulers in a more enlightened state of society, that it is prosperity of those who labour with their hands, which constitutes the principle and cause of the prosperity of States; he therefore made it his business to protect them against the intermediate orders of the community, by whom it is difficult to prevent them from being oppressed. His country was accordingly, at least during the first and better part of his reign, the best cultivated, and its population the most flourishing in India; while under the English and their dependents, the population of the Karnatik and Oudh, hastening towards the state of deserts, was the most wretched upon the face of the earth.

The fact is that Mornington, by the time he was at the Cape of Good Hope, had a full and clear grasp of the vital points in the situation. England was already at war with France. There was every danger of Bonaparte and Tipu, if not also the other Indian powers, making common cause to drive the British out of India. Governor Macartney, Lord Hobart, and Major Kirkpatrick who happened to be at the Cape then, had 'primed' him (Mornington) well. Napoleon had written to Tipu from Cairo: "You have already been informed of my arrival on the Red Sea, with an innumerable and invincible army, full of the desire of delivering you from the iron yoke of England". On arriving in India, the Governor-General got other proofs of the enemies' intentions. On the day he landed on the east coast, a French contingent (though it was composed of no more than a hundred adventurous volunteers from Mauritius) had also arrived at Mangalore on the west coast. There was shortly afterwards an ominous disclosure of the French intentions and plans in one of the Calcutta newspapers. These proofs were more than Wellesley needed to make warlike preparations against Tipu Sultan. Despite the confession of unpreparedness* on the part of the Madras subordinates, the

* Mr. Josiah Webbe, Secretary to the Madras Government, dwelt on the lack of resources, military weakness, the bankruptcy of the Madras Presidency, and Tipu's strength... and the utter

imperious Governor-General decided upon his famous campaign. He arrived in Madras on 31st December 1798, to direct the operations personally. On 9th January 1799, he wrote a letter to the Sultan, calling upon him to dismiss the French, to receive an English envoy, and to make terms with the Company and its allies. It was certain that Tipu would not tamely submit to such dictation. "He only replied to Mornington that he was going a-hunting. His cup was full. Mornington delayed no longer... On February 3, General Harris took the command; on 5th March, his troops entered the territory of Mysore."

The ground had been well and carefully prepared. As early as 12th August 1798, Wellesley had written a minute occupying 50 pages of the 'Despatches' in which he outlined his objectives thus:

First, to seize the whole maritime territory remaining in his (Tipu's) possession below the Ghats on the coast of Malabar, in order to preclude him from all future communications by sea with his French allies. Secondly, by marching the army from the coast of Coromandel directly upon his capital, to compel him to purchase peace by a formal cession of the territory seized on the coast of Malabar. Thirdly, to compel him to defray our whole expense in the war, and thus to secure the double advantage of indemnifying us for the expense occasioned by *his aggression*(!), and of reducing his resources with a view to our future security. Fourthly, to compel him to admit permanent Residents at his Court from us and our allies, a measure which would enable us at all times to check his operations, and to counteract the intricacies of his treachery. Fifthly, that the expulsion of all the natives of France now in his service, and the perpetual exclusion of all Frenchmen, both from his army and dominions, should be made conditions of any treaty of peace with him.

"Our allies" referred to above were the Nizam and the Peshva. The latter entered into the Triple Alliance only as a passive member, for diplomatic reasons. The Nizam was won over in spite of his recent grievances at having been thrown to the wolves by the 'non-interventionist' policy of Sir John Shore. He had participated in the earlier war against Mysore as an ally of the English. Yet in 1795, when the Marathas attacked him, his former friends resiled from their engagement and betrayed him in the hour of

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weakness of "our allies". "I can anticipate none but the most baneful consequences from a war with Tipu", he gloomily concluded.

dire need. Nevertheless he was once again persuaded to throw himself into the arms of the British. His defeat at Kharda (1795) and the heavy indemnity the Marathas exacted from him, and his betrayal by Sir John Shore, made the Nizam look to other allies. He had built up a force of 14,000 troops trained by the Frenchman Reymond, which he regarded as his bulwark against the Marathas as well as Tipu. But Wellesley did the trick. His *leger de main* and the adroit services of Malcolm, Roberts and Kirkpatrick brought about the disbanding of the army trained by the French, and the dismissal of all Frenchmen in the Nizam's service. In other words, the helpless ruler of Hyderabad 'inaugurated' the series of 'subsidiary alliances' (1st September 1798) for which Wellesley has become so famous. A British-officered force of 6,000 was to be maintained by the Nizam. By a subsequent revision of the treaty in October 1800, this force was increased to 10,000 and to meet the cost of its maintenance, the Nizam permanently ceded to the English all the territory he had recently acquired from Mysore by his participation in the late war against Tipu. Thereby the flank of the Madras Presidency was secured, and "what had been a danger was turned into a support".

The story of the war against Tipu is briefly told. It lasted hardly two months. General Harris marched upon Seringapatam with the utmost celerity. His army was "unquestionably the best appointed, the most amply and liberally supplied, the most perfect in point of discipline, and the most fortunate in the acknowledged experience and abilities of its officers in every department, which ever took the field in India". (W. H. Hutton). A Bombay contingent under General Stewart, and the Nizam's forces, acted as auxiliaries. The siege of Tipu's capital began on 5th April. Major-General Baird (who had once been Tipu's prisoner) led the attack. "In less than seven minutes from the period of issuing from the trenches the British colours were planted on the summit of the breach". Tipu fell fighting valiantly in the defence of his capital. As his biographer, Mir Hussein Ali Khan Kirmani, has depicted the *denouement*: "At the seventh hour from the morning, blood flowed from every wall and door, in the streets of Seringaputtam". The Sultan "courageous like a lion, . . . but at length having received several wounds in the face, drank the cup of Martyrdom". "On Saturday 28th Zi Kad, the Day of Judgment manifested itself". His body was later buried by the side of his father Haidar Ali's in Lal Baug. The mausoleum is a handsome building, with ebony and ivory doors, 'the gift of Lord Dalhousie'.

No fewer than 8,000 of the defenders are said to have perished along with their Sultan. On the side of the besiegers, the casualties were 892 Europeans (including 65 officers), and 639 natives. According to Bowring, "this would show that the proportionate loss in the ranks of the former (i.e., Europeans) was about four times that in the native troops". The booty captured in the palace included a magnificent throne, a superb *howdah*, curious and richly jewelled matchlocks and swords, solid gold and silver plate, costly carpets and chinaware, a profusion of fine gems, and a valuable library.* In the territorial distribution, the British kept for themselves, Seringapatam, Coimbatore, Kanara and Malabar; while the north-eastern districts were given to the Nizam, only to be retaken from him in 1800 (as mentioned above). Like Prussia in the third partition of Poland, the Marathas were offered a share in the spoils, even though they had not actively participated in the campaign; but the shrewd Nana Fadnavis prevented the Peshva from swallowing the bait to which were attached the terms of a 'Subsidiary Treaty' such as the Nizam had accepted. A boy (five years of age) of the old Hindu dynasty was installed on the throne of his ancestors, to rule over the central portions of Mysore, but under more rigid British control than was the case with the Nizam under the Subsidiary Treaty. The result may be summed up in the words of Wellesley's dispatch to the Directors, dated 3rd August 1799: His plans terminated in "the establishment of a central and separate government in Mysore, under the protection of the Company, . . . expedients best calculated to reconcile the interests of all parties, to secure the Company a less invidious and more efficient share of revenue, resource, commercial advantage and military strength than could be obtained under any other distribution of territory or power, and to afford the most favourable prospect of general and permanent tranquillity in India".

"The death of Tipu Sultan," observes Sir John Marriott, "removed from the Indian scene the most inveterate, the

* The specie alone amounted to £480,000, while the jewels were valued at nine lakhs. The Library contained 44 vols. of the Quran and 41 Commentaries thereon; 115 Sufi MSS; 24 on Ethics; 95 on Jurisprudence; 19 on Arts and Sciences; 54 on Philosophy; 20 on Astronomy; 69 on Mathematics and Physics; 45 on Philology; 29 on Lexicography; 118 on History; 213 of Poetry; 53 Letters; etc. With the exception of a precious copy of the Quran, the rest of the library was transferred to the newly founded College at Fort William, Calcutta.

most implacable and the most fanatical, perhaps the most formidable enemy encountered by the Company in its contest with the 'Native' Powers of India. But there was much in the career and character of Tipu, despite the vehemence of his anti-British sentiments, to extort respect and even admiration. If he had no more right than we had to claim territorial sovereignty in India, he had no less. If between ourselves and the French it was a war *a outrance*; so was it between Tipu and ourselves. We were equally adventurers in the field of Indian politics. If we had a right to seek the aid of the Nizam and the Peshva to subdue Tipu; Tipu had a right to call in the French to help in expelling us from the soil of India. We succeeded; he failed. But he displayed consistent courage, much persistence, and no little skill. While, then, we must rejoice in his defeat, we can respect his splendid effort to avert it."

There were four distinct stages by which the policy of 'subordinate isolation' was implemented by the Governors-General. In the first, the English lent a contingent of troops to assist a native prince; in the second, they took the field on their own account, assisted by the native troops; in the third, the native ally was required to supply not men but money with which to maintain a more efficient force than that lent by the princes; and lastly, while a British or British-trained force was imposed upon the 'Protected State', its expenses were met from lands ceded for that purpose permanently to the British. As Lyall has pointed out, "The subsidiary treaties made in India differed, therefore, from those made by England with European States in this respect, that whereas Austria or Russia raised armies on funds provided by England, Oudh or Hyderabad provided funds (later lands) on which the British Government raised armies".

We found all these stages illustrated in the case of the Nizam. "This bold stroke," states V. A. Smith, "instantly reduced the Nizam to complete dependence on the Company, and removed him from the list of powers whose enmity should be feared, or whose amity should be sought." Yet Wellesley disguised this subordination by characterising the relationship between the Nizam and the Company as having "in fact become one and the same in interest, policy, friendship and honour". Wellesley, his biographer has remarked, was "an ardent Unionist"—i.e., he stood for the union of Ireland with England. He pursued the same policy in India as well. Either a disputed succession and/or misrule in a semi-dependent State provided him—as to Dalhousie later—the *raison d'être* for further subordination or total supersession. On 26th November 1799, a treaty

with Sarboji, ruler of Tanjore, was ratified, "investing the entire and exclusive administration, civil and military, of Tanjore in the Company's government". The contending parties, according to Wellesley, "unanimously concurred in the expediency and justice of the treaty, in the form in which it has been concluded". At Surat, the relations between the Nawab and the British were somewhat strained. On the death of the ruler, the heir was obliged to surrender his administration, "for ever entirely and exclusively in the honourable English Company" (1799). Subsequent additions, including the absorption of Mandoi by 'lapse', resulted in the formation of the present Surat District. The annexation of the Carnatic was declared by the Governor-General on 27th July 1801, on the ground of very serious maladministration, to which, however, the English had made no small contribution. We have noted before that the 'double government' in the Carnatic was infinitely worse than what it was in Bengal. Now the 'pot' suddenly discovered that the 'kettle' was blacker than itself. Further, incriminating evidence was 'discovered' in the Seringapatam papers after the capture of that place, just as Warren Hastings had done at Benares against the Begums of Oudh, and with like consequences. That province was confiscated, leaving to the heir of the earliest ally of the British in India, a pension and the vain title of 'Nawab of Arcot'. Wellesley next turned to another early ally of the English, in the North, *viz.*, the Nawab of Oudh. The result was only an amputation and not total annihilation.

Like Turkey in Europe, Oudh had been long ailing, at least since the death of Shuja-ud-daula. Warren Hastings had drawn the *cordon sanitaire* around that State. But even the 'non-interventionist' Sir John Shore felt constrained to interfere in its internal affairs, in the interests of settled if not also good government. Confusion was made worse confounded by the "English locusts" as Wellesley called the parasites that were filling their own pockets greedily, ever since the time of Clive. "Disaffection and anarchy," wrote the Governor-General, "prevail throughout, and nothing but the presence of our two brigades prevents insurrection." Added to these conditions was the bogey of an Afghan invasion of Hindusthan by Zaman Shah, a grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The pedigree of Zaman Shah, if not the reality of the situation, lent an air of plausibility to the 'menace' apprehended by the Governor-General. The erstwhile 'buffer-State' was now described by Sir James Craig, Commander-in-Chief, as "worse than useless, as dangerous, and of the nature of an

enemy's fortress in his rear." The Nawab of Oudh was, consequently, 'persuaded' to submit to a Treaty, on 10th November 1801, by which the English 'subsidiary' forces were considerably augmented. In the time of Sir John Shore, the Nawab paid Rs. 76,00,000 for the maintenance of 13,000 British troops. Now he was compelled to cede the whole of the Doab with Rohilkhand to the Company. "The Nawab," says Hutton, "struggled like a bird in the net. . . . Then there was what Carlyle was fond of calling a 'pause of an awful nature': . . . the whole gamut of diplomacy had been run through. . . . Another method was now adopted." On 5th July 1801 Henry Wellesley (brother of the Governor-General) was dispatched to Lucknow to reinforce Colonel Scott and his troops "with instructions to conclude the matter with rapidity". The helpless Nawab had to yield. Wellesley regarded the arrangements advantageous and "satisfactory to both the parties to it". More detached critics, Marriott remarks, "agreed that the end achieved was better than the means employed". Hutton concludes: "But, after all, the one cardinal justification of Wellesley's policy towards Oudh lies, not in any benefit to the population or in an extension of the Company's territory or revenue, but in an absolute political necessity. . . . Wellesley found Oudh a pressing and unmistakable danger to the British position in India: he left it a safeguard and a support."

When all is said, the Marathas still remained—as in the time of Warren Hastings—"our one and only enemy". Wellesley, in the words of V. A. Smith, was all along trying to "induce all the Maratha chiefs to surrender everything which made life worth living in their eyes, and to accept his invitations, which so closely resembled those of the spider to the fly". "Hitherto," wrote the Governor-General in 1800, "either the capricious temper of Baji Rao (II), or some remains of the characteristic jealousy of the nation with regard to foreign relations, have frustrated my object and views." But he had not to wait for long. The chief obstacle in the path, Nana Fadnavis—in whom were personified, according to the British Resident at Poona, Col. Palmer, "all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government"—having been removed by death, a state of civil war ensued. Yasvantrao Holkar (successor to the great Ahilyabai and Tukojirao) overthrew the combined forces of Daulatrao Shinde (Mahadji's successor) and the Peshva, in the battle of Poona on 25th October, 1802, and raised to the Peshva's *gadi* Amritrao, a natural brother of Bajirao II. The latter, therefore, following the example of his unpatriotic father, sought the help of the English at Bassein. The result was the Treaty of Bassein signed by

the fugitive Peshva on the last day of the year 1802. It has been described by Marriott as "the crown and completion of Lord Wellesley's subsidiary system". By it, "the Peshwa sacrificed his independence as the price of protection". "The compact purported to be a general defensive alliance, for the reciprocal protection of the territories of the Company, the Peshwa, and their respective allies". The Peshwa bound himself to pay Rs 26,00,000 a year for the maintenance of a subsidiary force of not less than six battalions, and to exclude from his service all Europeans "of a nation hostile to the English". The Peshwa also renounced all claims over Surat, agreed to respect all the engagements between the Gaikwad and the British, and to submit to the arbitration of the British all his disputes with the Nizam or any other power. Bajirao was reinstated in Poona by British bayonets, on the 13th May, 1803. Amritrao was allowed to retire to Benares with a pension. The victors, however, very soon realised that they had been more sanguine than the facts of the situation warranted. Arthur Wellesley had more shrewdly regarded the engagement with Bajirao as "a treaty with a cipher". Castlereagh, President of the Board of Control, considered it "hopeless to attempt to govern the Maratha Empire through a feeble and perhaps disaffected Peshwa". He prophesied that it would involve the English "in endless and complicated distractions of that turbulent Empire". Though Malcolm saw in the restoration of the Peshwa the dawn of an era of tranquillity, prosperity, and peace, it inevitably meant "peace only through war". The other Maratha chiefs, particularly Shinde, Bhonsle of Berar (or Nagpur), and Holkar would not tamely submit to British dictation. "As surely as in the old days their claim to *chauth* had destroyed the Mughal power, so surely would they be destroyed in their turn by the acceptance of subsidiary alliances". The departure of Colonel Collins, the British agent in Shinde's camp, on 3rd August, 1803, portended 'the shape of things to come'.

The second Anglo-Maratha War involved five sets of operations: three major ones, and two minor (in Bundelkhand and Orissa). The three principal operations were against Bhonsle, Shinde and Holkar, in the Deccan and Central India. The campaign opened with the capture of Ahmadnagar by Arthur Wellesley on 12th August 1803. It led on to the battle of Assaye (45 miles north of Aurangabad), on 23rd September, described by Grant Duff as "a triumph more splendid than any recorded in Deccan history". That was followed up by the capture of Burhanpur and Asirghar, and another victory over Bhonsla at

Argaon, on 29th November. Gawilgarh was taken on 14th December. Three days later, Bhonsla signed the Treaty of Deogaon, by which he surrendered Cuttack to the English, and all lands west of the river Wardha, agreeing to receive a British Resident at Nagpur, not to entertain any subjects of countries at war with the British, to give up all claims to *chauth* on the Nizam, and to submit to British arbitration in all disputes.

In the north, General Lake occupied Aligarh on 4th September. On the 11th of the same month Delhi was entered and the Mughal Emperor taken in custody. Agra surrendered on 18th October. These rapid successes led to the battle of Laswari, on the 31st, involving great slaughter. Hence Shinde was obliged to come to terms. The Treaty of Surji Arjangaon was signed on 30th December, 1803, by which the English acquired all the lands between the Jamuna and the Ganges and to the north of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohad. The other conditions already imposed upon the Peshva and Bhonsle also formed part of the treaty with Shinde. With great exultation the Governor-General declared: "Peace is the fairest fruit of victory, the brightest ornament of military triumph, and the highest reward of successful struggle. The peace which has been concluded comprehends every object of the war with every practicable security for the continuance of security." But, as his biographer wrote, "The Governor-General was too hasty. The fruits of peace were not yet ripe."

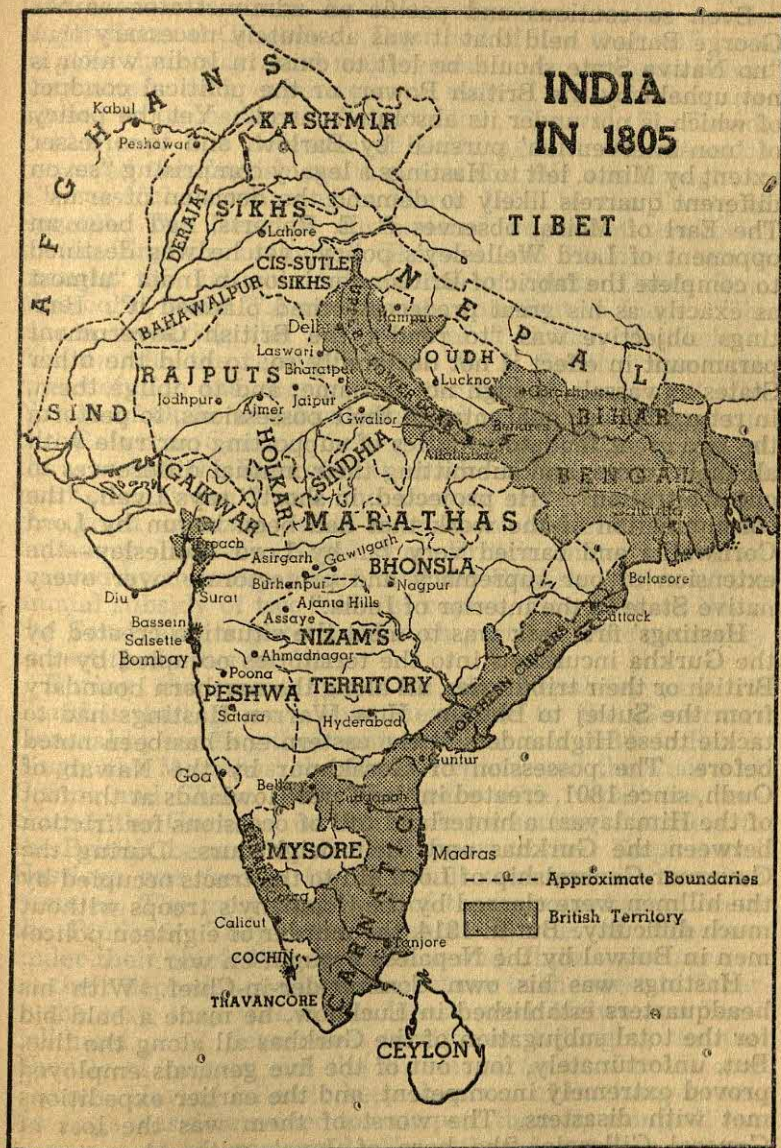
Holkar was still at large. He threw down a challenge by the execution of three English officers in his service: Captains Vickers, Todd, and Ryan. Negotiations having proved futile, on 16th April 1804, Wellesley ordered Generals Lake and Arthur Wellesley to begin operations against the ruler of Indore. At first all seemed to go well with the English. But when Lake retired to Cawnpore for the monsoon, his two subordinate Colonels, Murray and Monson, bungled. "They seem to have been afraid of Holkar," wrote Arthur Wellesley, "and both to have fled from him in different directions." Disaster followed disaster, and Lake was constrained to admit, "I have lost five battalions and six companies, the flower of the army, and how they are to be replaced at this day, God only knows. I have to lament the loss of some of the finest young men and most promising in the army." (2nd September, 1804, *Wellesley Despatches*, vol. iv.p.197). "It was a lesson which native ballads long kept alive and which British officers did not soon forget". Immediately it struck down the Governor-General: he was recalled. Wellesley's programme had to wait till 1818 for its completion.

However, it was not 'roses, roses, all the way' for Holkar. He attempted but failed to take Delhi. He was defeated at Dig on 13th November 1804, and forced to retire into the Punjab. Nevertheless, Lake experienced another impressive set-back at Bharatpur. The fortified town, more than six miles in circumference, well garrisoned and ably defended, resisted all the efforts of Lake, who, indeed, as Wellington said, "blundered terribly" and lost over three thousand men in his fruitless assaults. All the same, Bharatpur, along with the princes of Rajputana, entered into subsidiary engagements with the English. Though Wellesley was recalled, he had succeeded, to use his own words, in "establishing a comprehensive system of alliance and political relation over every region of Hindustan and the Deccan". With a prophetic vision he declared to Castle-reagh, "The Company, with relation to its territory in India, must be viewed in the capacity of a sovereign. If any other principle be recognised and the Company be permitted to hold the nominal sovereignty of India, endless confusion must ensue; in such an extremity no possible remedy could save this country from anarchy and ruin but the instantaneous assumption of the direct executive power of the British possessions in India by the Crown of the United Kingdom." In the oft-quoted words of Sidney Owen, "there existed a British Empire in India", before Wellesley's time; now, by his direct and indirect operations, the Company had acquired "the Empire of India".

"Lord Wellesley's settlement," wrote Lyall in 1894, "laid out the territorial distribution of all India (excepting the Punjab and Sind) on the general plan which was followed for the next forty years, and which survives in its main outlines to this day." His 'forward' policy which made the English supreme in India did not meet with the approval of his employers (the Company's Directors and Proprietors) whom Wellesley denounced as a "pack of narrow-minded old women". But the attempts to impeach him were foiled by the more sympathetic Parliament. Ultimately the Company compensated him with a present of £20,000, and paid him the rare honour of erecting his statue in his own lifetime.

Lord Cornwallis was again sent out to India to reverse the 'forward' policy of Wellesley. He arrived in Calcutta on 30th July 1805. Wellesley embarked for England on 15th August. The new Governor-General was also to be his own Commander-in-Chief. His policy, as also that of his successors, Sir George Barlow and Lord Minto, will be discussed in the section dealing with the policy of 'non-intervention'. Cornwallis died on 5th October the same

year and was followed by Sir George Barlew, who in his turn was succeeded by Lord Minto in 1807. Minto's place



was taken by Lord Moira (afterwards Marquess Hastings)

in 1813. The next great spurt in the expansion of British dominion in India took place in the regime of Hastings (1813-1823).

Even so cautious and pacific an administrator as Sir George Barlow held that it was absolutely necessary that "no Native State should be left to exist in India which is not upheld by the British Power, or the political conduct of which is not under its absolute control". Yet the policy of 'non-intervention' pursued by Barlow, and to a lesser extent by Minto, left to Hastings a legacy comprising "seven different quarrels likely to demand the decision of arms". The Earl of Moira, observes P. E. Roberts, had been an opponent of Lord Wellesley's policy; yet he was destined to complete the fabric of British dominion in India "almost as exactly as his great predecessor had planned it". Hastings' objective was "to render the British Government paramount in effect if not declaredly so; to hold the other States as vassals, though not in name; and to oblige them, in return for our guarantee of their possessions, to perform the two great feudatory duties of supporting our rule with all their forces, and submitting their mutual differences to our arbitration". "He projected, in short," says Lyall, "the consummation of the work that had been begun by Lord Cornwallis and carried very far by Lord Wellesley—the extension of our supremacy and protectorate over every native State in the interior of India."

Hastings' first task was to meet the situation created by the Gurkha incursions into the territories occupied by the British or their tributaries, all along the northern boundary from the Sutlej to Bhutan. How Warren Hastings had to tackle these Highlanders at the eastern end has been noted before. The possession of Gorakhpur by the Nawab of Oudh, since 1801, created in the Tarai (lowlands at the foot of the Himalayas) a hinterland full of occasions for friction between the Gurkhas and their neighbours. During the Governor-Generalship of Lord Minto the tracts occupied by the hillmen were cleared by the Company's troops without much difficulty. But in 1814, the murder of eighteen policemen in Butwal by the Nepalese brought on war.

Hastings was his own Commander-in-Chief. With his headquarters established in Lucknow, he made a bold bid for the total subjugation of the Gurkhas all along the line. But, unfortunately, four out of the five generals employed proved extremely incompetent, and the earlier expeditions met with disasters. The worst of them was the loss of General Gillespie, 'the hero of Java', with whom were sacrificed no fewer than 740 men. Though the Gurkhas numbered less than half of the attacking force, they could

not be dislodged from their mountain stockades. "The discredit, to our arms," declared the Governor-General, "and the baneful influence which this reverse must have upon future operations, are light in comparison to the loss of Major-General Gillespie. . . Deprived of him they will have to poke their way amid many errors and oversights before they attain such experience as may give them due confidence in themselves." Nevertheless, General (Sir David) Ochterlony—the defender of Delhi against Holkar—soon retrieved the English position, and the war was brought to a successful termination, in March 1816, by the Treaty of Sagauli. The Nepalese surrendered important territories to the English, including Gharwal and Kumaon, which brought the valuable hill-stations of Simla, Dehra Dun, Mussoorie, Naini Tal and Almora into British India. "The clause requiring the admission of a British Resident at Khatmandu, the capital," writes V. A. Smith, "was more distasteful to the enemy than the loss of territory." The Nawab of Oudh who had advanced two *crores* of rupees to the Governor-General during the most critical period of the war, and the Raja of Sikkim who occupied a strategical position between Nepal and Bhutan, were rewarded with the grant of some lands near their borders. The final boundary between Nepal and British India was later marked by masonry pillars; and the English, in lieu of the annual subsidy of two *lakhs* of rupees, gave back to Nepal the Tarai, and only retained such parts as were necessary to rectify the border line.

During the worst period of the Nepalese war, the Gurkhas had given a bad headache to the Governor-General by sending their emissaries far and wide: to Ranjit Singh, the Marathas, the Pindari chiefs, and the Courts of Burma and China. After the peace with Nepal was concluded, the Gurkhas, far from being a source of anxiety to the British, became a pillar of support to their Empire, and Hastings was free to turn his full attention to his other enemies. The most dangerous of these, immediately, were the Pindaris. They were organised hordes of robbers—under their chiefs like Amir Khan and Chitu—who carried on their depredations from Rajputana in the west to Bihar in the east; they spread like locusts over Malwa and Bundelkhand, and devastated territories belonging to the Bhonsle of Nagpur and the Nizam, as far as Cuttack and Guntur. Having failed to keep them out of the 'ring-fence', Hastings was determined to extirpate them by using all the resources at his command. He gathered together a huge army of 113,000 men and 300 guns, subdivided into the 'Army of Hindusthan' (4 divisions) under his own com-

mand, and the 'Army of the Deccan' (5 divisions) under Sir Thomas Hislop. Since the Pindaris were strongly suspected of being in league with the Marathas, a double cordon was placed round them: one facing inward to squeeze the robber bands, and the other facing outwards to prevent the Marathas helping them. This had the inevitable result of converting the Pindari-hunt into the Third Anglo-Maratha War; for trouble was already brewing to that end in the various parts of the Maratha dominions.

The Governor-General had a clear grasp of the situation, and he unequivocally declared: "If there was no choice left, he should prefer an immediate war with the Marathas, for which he was fully prepared, to an extensive system of defence against a consuming predatory warfare, carried on clandestinely by the Maratha powers, wasting our resources, till they might see a practical opportunity of coming to an open rupture." Both his Council at Calcutta and the Home authorities were at first reluctant to enter into fresh hostilities with the Marathas, but the march of events forced their hands, and they acquiesced in the plans of the Governor-General. In October 1813, the Nawab of Bhopal, being attacked by the combined forces of Shinde and Bhonsle, asked for British assistance. Protection was offered to him, but later countermanded. Baroda was a 'subsidiary' State. In June 1814 its minister, Gangadhar Shastri was deputed to the Peshva—another British 'subsidiary' chief—for the settlement of some dispute between the two. But the negotiations were protracted, and the Shastri was treacherously murdered, in July 1815, by Trimbakji, a confidant of the Peshva. Elphinstone, British Resident in Poona, ordered Bajirao Peshva to apprehend the murderer and hand him over to British custody. This heinous episode led eventually to the tightening of British control over the Peshva owing to his scandalous behaviour in this affair. Bajirao was deprived of even his titular headship of the Marathas by the revised treaty of 13th June 1817; the territories held by him outside Maharashtra were taken away from him; and he was obliged to admit that Trimbakji (Dengle) was the real murderer of Gangadhar Shastri.

In Central India, since Lake's campaign, the situation was very confused. Peace had been patched up hastily and on very unsound principles by Sir George Barlow, both with Shinde and Holkar, leaving the Rajput States completely exposed to the Maratha and Pindari attacks. Consequently, the Raja of Jaipur, with good reason, accused the Company of making "its faith subservient to its

convenience". The situation is well depicted by Major Ross thus:

The evil that grew there in such alarming proportions was no accidental circumstance;...it was the direct result of chronic anarchy, which arose from the inordinate and unchecked ambition indulged in by the native rulers. All these princes were scrambling for personal power, and not one of them was safe from the inroads of his neighbours; their councils were divided, and their tributaries in constant rebellion; their armies were continually clamouring for their pay, and their military leaders in a perpetual state of insubordination; they observed no duties, and they acknowledged no rights; society under their guidance was crumbling into ruins, and their subjects were pursuing their own selfish advantages. It was only natural, then, that men should combine to plunder and to devastate, and should continue to do so until there was a complete revolution in the native ideas of government.

Still it was Hastings' boast "to have an earnest desire to accomplish everything by pacific means, and to be able to declare with sincerity, that the exclusive object of his present preparations was to get rid of the greatest pest that society ever experienced".

We have little space to describe the internal conditions of even the major States of this time. Suffice it to note that on the death of Jaswantrao Holkar, on 20th October 1811, the affairs of Indore fell into utter confusion in which Tulsibai (a mistress of the deceased Holkar) and the Pindari chief Amir Khan revelled. At Nagpur, Raghuji Bhonsle II having died in March 1816, Appa Saheb secured the regency (owing to the imbecility of Raghuji's son Parsoji) and entered into a subsidiary treaty with the British, on 27th May 1816. The circumstances in which the Peshva was compelled to submit to the revised Treaty of Poona (on 13th June 1817) have already been described. Daulatrao Shinde, too, fell on evil days and signed a new Treaty with the English on 5th November 1817. Yet all these engagements proved of little avail on account of the moral depravity of the chiefs who signed them. On the day on which Daulatrao Shinde put his signature to the subsidiary treaty renouncing his claims over the Rajputs, Bajirao attacked the British Residency at Poona. At the same time, Appa Saheb of Nagpur and Malharrao Holkar II of Indore, raised the standard of revolt against the English. The result was the defeat of all the rebels: Bajirao at Kirki (Khadki), Appa Saheb at Sitabuldi, and Holkar at Mahidpur (November-December 1817). Appa Saheb fled the

country and died at Jodhpur in 1840. Nagpur was bestowed upon a minor son of Raghuji Bhonsla II. On 6th January 1818, Holkar made a fresh treaty (Treaty of Mandasor) with the English, by which he kept his seat at Indore, but was deprived of his claims on the Rajputs, relinquished his territory south of the Narmada, agreed to submit all his foreign relations to the British, and recognised Amir Khan (the Pindari chief*) as the Nawab of Tonk. The other Pindari chief, Chitu, was devoured by a tiger, and the predatory hordes were finally suppressed. Bajirao alone persisted in his suicidal folly for some time, but was again defeated at Koregaon (on 1st January) and Ashti (on 20th February 1818). On 3rd June 1818, he was finally deposed, and sent to Bithur, near Cawnpore, to live there a 'lotos eater's life' on an annual pension of eight *lakhs* of rupees, until his death on 14th January 1851. Elphinstone believed that "if he (Bajirao II) were less deficient in courage, he would be ambitious, imperious, inflexible and persevering". Though lacking in courage, he was handsome in appearance and possessed accomplishments like learning and eloquence. He could 'smile and smile and be a villain.' As Wellesley had reinstated the Wodeyar in Mysore after the overthrow of Tipu Sultan, so Hastings tolerated a Chhatrapati at Satara, while the rest of the Peshva's territories were absorbed in the British dominions.

The Marquess of Hastings was Governor-General till 1823. His reforms are dealt with in another place. His work as an Empire builder is thus summed up by his biographer: "When he reached Calcutta, English possessions were disjointed and fragmentary, long frontiers had to be guarded and maintained, communications between the different parts were uncertain and difficult, rapid access to many of the provinces impossible. These territories were in contact with turbulent and hostile neighbours, and were

* Amir Khan was a Pathan. Prinsep makes the following distinction between the Pathans and the Pindaris: "They commanded forces of a different description from those of the Pindaree chiefs... Indeed, the grand difference between the two classes was that the Pathans were banded together for the purpose of preying on Governments and powerful chiefs: To this end their forces moved about with the materials of regular battles and sieges, so as to work on the fears of princes and men in power, extorting contributions and other advantages from them, by such intimidation as an efficient army could only impress: while the object of the Pindarees was universal plunder." Captain Sydenham wrote about the latter in 1809: "They avoid fighting, for they come to plunder, and not to fight." According to Sir John Malcolm: "Like swarms of locusts, acting from instinct, they destroyed and left waste whatever province they visited."

exposed to the desolating effects of unchecked violence, and to the ruin and misery caused by inroads of predatory hordes. . . . All this was changed by the Marquess of Hastings. The hostility of Nepal was overcome, and the northern frontier was secured. The Maratha combination against British rule and the predatory system which threatened the Company's territories were annihilated. Central India was settled and pacified. In a word, the independent native states who conceived in 1813 that they could expel the English from India were defeated, and in 1823 every prince in that vast region up to the Sutlej was brought into subjection to the Government of Calcutta".

Special mention must be made of the series of subsidiary treaties Hastings made with the princes of Rajputana who invited British protection from the Pathans as well as the Marathas. Between December 1817 and December 1818, Udaipur, Kotah, Bundi, Kishangarh, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Banswara, Dungarpur, etc., entered into compacts with the Company implying "defensive alliance, perpetual friendship, protection and subordinate co-operation" with the British. Thereby a solid bulwark was created against the turbulent Amirs of Sind, and the militant Sikhs, whose subjugation was the work of Hastings' successors.

The tide of British conquest suffered fluctuations of ebb and flow according to the exigencies of changing situations, but it never stopped until the natural boundaries of India were reached. Or, in the words of Sir Alfred Lyall: "Our policy might vary, backward or forward; we still found ourselves mounting step by step up to the high office of ultimate arbiter in every dispute and supreme custodian of the peace of all India." After Hastings, Lord Amherst became Governor-General (1823-28). The most notable event of his time was the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) which, however, does not strictly come within our purview. By the Treaty of Yandaboo (22nd February 1126) the King of Burma recognised the British Protectorate over Assam, Kachar and Manipur, and ceded the maritime provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim. Thus, writes Lyall, "a non-Indian people was for the first time brought within the jurisdiction of the Indian Empire". One incident in this connexion calls for notice: the 47th Native Infantry openly mutinied at Barrackpur, on being ordered for service in Burma; and it was ruthlessly shot down. In the last year of the Burmese War, taking advantage of a disputed succession, an expedition was sent to Bharatpur, under Lord Combermere, and the humiliation of Lake's failure there twenty years before was "amply avenged." But, as V. A. Smith has remarked, "The glory of the

achievement was dimmed by the excessive rapacity for prize-money displayed by Lord Combermere." He enriched himself to the extent of six out of the forty-eight lakhs found in the royal treasury. (Marshman, ii.p.409).

The annexations of Lord William Bentinck, whose general policy of 'non-intervention' is discussed elsewhere, may be summarily referred to here. The administration of Mysore was taken over by the Company in 1831, on account of the misbehaviour of the Raja; but was restored by Lord Ripon in 1881. Worse conditions prevailed in Coorg under Vira Raja whose rule became intolerable even to his own subjects. Consequently he was dethroned (in 1834) after a military campaign, and deported to England where he died in 1863. Kachar was annexed on the death of its ruler in 1830; and Jaintia in 1835, "because the Raja refused to surrender men who had kidnapped British subjects and sacrificed them to the goddess Kali". Another minor annexation was that of Karnool, in 1842, by Lord Auckland, occasioned by the revolt of its Nawab who was a descendant of Aurangzeb's officer Daud Khan. But the most notorious act of Imperial spoliation was the conquest of Sind, in 1843, by Sir Charles Napier.

The Amirs of Sind had helped the British during the First Afghan War which is dealt with in the note on British Foreign Policy, at the end of this chapter. Yet, at the close of that war, Lord Ellenborough "deliberately provoked a war (with Sind) in order that he might annex the province." Napier bullied the Baluchies into hostile attacks which culminated in an assault on Colonel Outram's residence, on 15th February 1843. The 'rebels' were butchered in two battles—of Miami and Daba—though the British losses were not inconsiderable; and the victor shamelessly boasted of his "very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality!" He had no scruple in pocketing £70,000 "as his share of the prize-money". Outram was offered £3,000, but he distributed that amount among charitable institutions. He sympathised with the Amirs and declared they "never contemplated opposing our power, and were only driven to do so from desperation." The fact was that, as V. A. Smith has pointed out, "So, long as it (Sind) remained independent the navigation of the Indus was liable to be blocked by hostile tribes. The desire to obtain control of the great waterway seems to have been the leading motive of the annexationists in the time of Lord Auckland as well as in that of Lord Ellenborough." How outrageous the whole affair was may be assessed in terms of all the previous British engagements with the Amirs. Lord Minto's treaty of 1809 declared "eternal friendship between the

contracting parties". That treaty was confirmed in 1820. Further, in 1832, "the two contracting parties (again) bound themselves never to look with the eye of covetousness on the possessions of each other." The detailed stipulations included: (1) that no person shall bring any description of military stores by the above river or roads; (2) that no armed vessels or boats shall come by the said river; and (3) that no English merchants shall be allowed to settle in Sind, but shall come as occasion requires, and having stopped to transact their business, shall return to India. Little wonder, Napier is commemorated in the 'sardonic pun'; "I have Sind (sinned)!" He ruled the conquered province like Protector Cromwell in Ireland, "as a strong, masterful, military despot, and when he returned to England was received with enthusiasm". (V. A. Smith).

In the wake of this "deal" in Sind, Lord Ellenborough performed another "act of expediency", towards the close of 1843, in Gwalior. Early that year, Jankoji Shinde (adopted son of Daulatrao Shinde) died, leaving his State in turmoil. The army, 40,000 strong, possessed besides 200 guns, and showed complete lack of discipline. Across the Sutlej there was a Sikh army, 70,000 strong, "confident in its own strength, proud of its various successes against its neighbours, desirous of war and plunder, and under no discipline or control", as the Governor-General viewed it. Though the 'subsidiary force' provided for in Wellesley's treaty with Shinde had been allowed to lapse since 1804, it was suddenly remembered by Ellenborough, and invoked. "The British Government," write Thompson and Garratt, "was about to surprise native India by discovering a tender regard for treaties." Two British armies marched into Gwalior because of "the existence within the territories of Sindhia of an unfriendly government." The Gwalior forces were defeated at Maharajpur, on 29th December 1843, with 3,000 casualties for the State and 800 for the British. Another battle was fought on the same day at Panniar, with a like result. Gwalior Fort was taken possession of by the Company's troops, and the State army was reduced to 3,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry with 32 guns. The British formed the Regency for the next ten years, the prince being a minor.

We now enter upon the last stage of the British conquest of India. It comprises the annexation of the Punjab, as a consequence of two wars with the Sikhs, and Dalhousie's application of the 'doctrine of lapse' to various other States. To begin with, we shall briefly recount the story of the rise and development of the Sikh power in the Punjab. It is a remarkable story, such as that of the Rajputs down to the

days of Akbar and of the Marathas since the time of Aurangzeb, coeval with the rise and fall of the Imperial Mughals, yet continuing in its interest and importance down to our times. The British had never encountered foes so valiant or friends so loyal as the Sikhs excepting the noble and courageous Gurkhas. They dealt with both as Akbar had done with the chivalrous Rajputs and converted them into the staunchest pillars of their Empire in India.

Guru Nanak or Baba Nanak, as he is more affectionately called, was a contemporary of Babur and outlived him by about eight years (1469-1538). He was the product of the impact of Islam upon Hinduism, and a prophet of the synthesis between the two faiths and communities, as Kabir. Corresponding to the succession of the great Mughal Emperors, from Babur to Aurangzeb (1526-1707), Nanak was followed by an equally remarkable 'spiritual dynasty' of Gurus, officially ending with Guru Gobind Singh (1538-1708) but really with Banda (1716). The famous Golden Temple of the Sikhs in Amritsar was built in the time of the fifth Guru, Ramdas (1574-81), on a spot granted by Akbar. We have referred to the execution of the sixth Guru (Arjun) by order of Jahangir, in 1606, for affording asylum to the rebellious prince Khushru. That made the Sikhs more militant under Arjun's son and successor Har Gobind (1606-45). "I wear two swords," declared the seventh Guru, "as emblems of the spiritual and the temporal authority. In the Guru's house religion and worldly life shall be combined". In 1628, they had become formidable enough to rout the Imperial troops at Sangrama, near Amritsar. The latitudinarian Dara Shukoh hobnobbed with the seventh Guru, Har Rai (1645-61). The eighth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, met with a tragic end at the hands of Aurangzeb. He died a martyr, giving up his head but not his faith: *sir dya, sar na dya!* He enjoined upon his more famous successor, Gobind Singh, "the duty and sanctity of revenge". Guru Gobind Singh transformed 'jackals into lions and sparrows into hawks'. He exchanged the sword for the plough and created the *Khalsa*, declaring: "I shall make lions of the men of all the four castes, and destroy the Mughals." Under him every *Sikh* (disciple) was converted into a *Singh* (lion): he was baptised by the drinking of *Pahul* (holy water) stirred by a dagger, and wore the five insignia of his order, *viz.*, *Kesh* (uncut hair), *Kanga* (comb), *Kara* (iron bangle), *Kuchh* (shorts), and *Khanda* or *Kirpan* (sword). "If Cromwell's Ironsides could have been inspired with the Jesuit's unquestioning acceptance of their Superior's decisions on moral and spiritual questions," writes Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "the result would have

equalled Guru Gobind's Sikhs as a fighting machine." At the moment of his death, at Nanded in the Deccan, this greatest of the Sikh Gurus, told his followers: "I have entrusted you to the Immortal God. Ever remain under His protection. Wherever there are five Sikhs assembled, who abide by the Guru's teachings, know that I am in the midst of them... I have infused my soul into the *Khalsa* and the *Granth Sahib*... Obey the *Granth Sahib*. It is the visible body of the Guru. And let him who desireth to meet me diligently search its hymns." Banda, though he is excluded from the official list of Gurus, was not unworthy of his predecessors. In fact his determined fight against the enemies of the *Khalsa* and his glorious martyrdom in 1716, in the time of Farukh-siyar, imparted to the Sikhs a tradition of loyalty to their faith and martial vigour for which they have been always famous. Indeed, if Guru Gobind Singh might be compared to Shivaji, Banda fell like Sambhaji, a victim to the ferocity of the Mughal Emperor. The struggle of the Sikhs thereafter was not unlike that of the Marathas for survival; and even like the Marathas under the Peshva Madhavrao I, the Sikhs rose to political eminence under the great Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab (1780-1839.).

What favoured the recovery and further rise of the Sikhs, between the execution of Banda (1716) and the foundation of the Sikh kingdom by Ranjit Singh about 1798, was the anarchy in the Punjab caused by the effeminacy of the later Mughal Emperors, and the series of foreign invasions under Nadir Shah (1738-9), Ahmad Shah Abdali (1748-61), and Zaman Shah (1798-99). The frequent changes of the governors in this unsettled region gave the Sikhs all the opportunities they needed. Between 1712 and 1769, for instance, Lahore passed under no fewer than twenty governors in succession; during the eleven years from 1756 to 1767, seven revolutions took place in that city and twelve 'viceroys' ruled one after the other. Exasperated by the Sikh 'guerillas', Nadir Shah is said to have exclaimed: "Whence come these long-haired devils who dare to molest me?" Quick came the response: "Their homes are on their saddles." When Ahmad Shah Abdali was finally retreating from the Punjab in 1762, they pursued and harassed him much as the Marathas had done with Aurangzeb during his last withdrawal to Ahmadnagar. The Marathas were compelled to retire permanently from Lahore after the Panipat disaster in 1761, and the Sikhs took possession of that city in 1764. They would have been still there but for the recent partition of the Punjab. In the course of the next ten years

they spread over the entire province, from Saharanpur in the east to Attock in the west, and from Multan in the south to Jammu and Kangra in the north.

A brief account of the civil and military organisation of the Sikhs up to the time of Ranjit Singh may be added to complete the picture of their rise to power. During the period of confusion they divided themselves into local groups called the *Misals*. Each of these *Misals* elected a chief who led them in war as well as peace; otherwise all its members were perfectly equal. Membership of a *Misal* conferred political, religious and social equality. Though military service was voluntary, the profession of arms was regarded as the most honourable of all occupations. One among the *Sardars* or clan-leaders was selected by common consent as the head of the *Khalsa* which constituted the fighting force of the Sikhs. The *Akalis* were a band of religious devotees charged with the upkeep of the *Gurudwaras* or Sikh temples; they also constituted in times of war, the spearhead of the *Khalsa*, being fired by a zeal which was almost fanatical. Their military organisation very closely resembled that of the Marathas under Shivaji. They were hardy cavalymen whose homes were on their saddles, lightly equipped but invincible because of their 'guerilla tactics' and celerity. In their national assemblies or *Gurumata* they were like the ancient Greeks during the pan-Hellenic Olympics. As Sir John Malcolm observed: "When a *Gurumata* or national council is called, all the Sikh chiefs assemble at Amritsar. The assembly is convened by the *Akalis*; and when the chiefs meet on this solemn occasion it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of the general good; and actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion and commonwealth to which he belongs."

The Sikhs rose to the zenith of their political importance and power in the time of Ranjit Singh who was described by a contemporary Frenchman, Victor Jacquemot, as "an extraordinary man—a Bonaparte in miniature". He was the last great statesman produced by that part of India which was still independent. After him the whole country came under British rule. Guru Tegh Bahadur, indeed, according to a legend narrated by V. A. Smith, had prognosticated the overthrow of Aurangzeb's Empire by a race of men coming from across the seas in the direction of the setting Sun. Likewise, Maharaja Ranjit Singh is said to have foretold that the whole map of India would very soon be dyed red: "*Sab lal hojayga*."

Ranjit was born at Gujranwalla on 2nd November 1780. He was the son of Mahan Singh, chieftain of the *Sukarchakia Misal*, who had made himself master of Jammu before his death in 1792, at the age of twenty-seven. He had inherited the chiefship when he was barely ten years old. Ranjit was just twelve when his father died. Pockmarked and blind in the left eye, it was the ambition of this illiterate but martial boy to make himself the sovereign of all the Sikhs. He all but attained that position. He conquered Multan in the south, Kangra and Kashmir in the north, and Attock and Peshawar in the west; but he was prevented from extending his kingdom to the Cis-Sutlej region and Sind because of English opposition. Yet, once Ranjit Singh recognised the strength of the British, he showed the wisdom of cultivating their friendship and keeping his hands free for the subjugation of the rest of the Punjab.

The acquisition of Lahore from Zaman Shah in 1798 (with the title of Raja recognised by that last Durrani ruler of Afghanistan) provided Ranjit Singh with a pivot from which he struck hard and persistently in all directions, until he became supreme in the territories described above. We have room here only to record the results of his strenuous campaigns, without dwelling on their military details. One of the earliest and most important of these was the attempted conquest of the Cis-Sutlej area. Ranjit Singh occupied Ludhiana for a time, but, as stated before, curbed his ambition in that direction on account of the English opposition. The diplomacy of Charles Metcalfe and the military demonstrations of David Ochterlony resulted in the treaty of "perpetual friendship", signed at Amritsar on 25th April 1809. By this the English frontier was extended from the Jamuna to the Sutlej, and a British force was stationed at Ludhiana. It also brought the 'Cis-Sutlej' Sikhs permanently under the British Protectorate, leading to the fateful Anglo-Sikh wars that culminated in the annexation of the Punjab under Dalhousie. Frustrated and yet fortified in the east, Ranjit turned in other directions for the satisfaction of his ambitions.

Multan, long under Muslim rule, was liberated in 1818. Its Nawab died fighting like Tipu Sultan; but Ranjit, following the example of Akbar, and unlike the English at Seringapatam, gave high and honourable employment to the sons of his fallen enemy. He next turned to Kashmir which he finally subdued, in spite of disheartening failures earlier, in 1819. Long before this he had captured Kangra district from the Gurkhas in 1811; and Jammu had come to him as an inheritance from his father.

In 1813 he had also turned to the west and occupied Attock after defeating the Pathans at Haidaru. Peshawar was Ranjit's next objective. It was won and lost several times by the Sikhs, during which period, Ranjit appointed or recognised Afghans as governors of the place, contenting himself with receiving tribute from them. But finding that arrangement precarious and expensive, he finally conquered it and made Peshawar a regular province of the kingdom of Lahore. The fugitive⁸ Shah Shuja (son of Zaman Shah) during his attempted recovery of the throne of Kabul, in 1833, recognised the sovereignty of Ranjit Singh over Peshawar in return for Sikh assistance in his project; but the Punjabi hold on that frontier stronghold had to be made good only by force of arms. Ranjit Singh succeeded in retaining Peshawar during his lifetime, in spite of the military and diplomatic efforts of the Afghans for its recovery. In 1836 Jamrud (at the entrance of the Khybar Pass) was fortified, as a foil for the protection of Peshawar, and it was held in the face of the fiercest attacks on it by Dost Muhammad's son Muhammad Akbar in 1837. Ranjit's valiant general Hari Singh Nalwa died of a mortal wound during this defence of the frontier citadel.

Ranjit Singh did not long survive the completion of his conquests. He died on 27th July, 1839, "as like the old Lion as he had lived." He invites comparison with Akbar and Shivaji in several important respects. He possessed the ambition as well as the constructive genius of both. He had the head to plan and the will to execute his plans with minute attention to detail and very great industry. He had an iron constitution and inexhaustible energy. He had the insatiable curiosity and wide eclectic interests of Akbar, and the sagacious tolerance of the greatest of the Mughals and the Marathas. Jacquemot states that Ranjit Singh asked "a hundred thousand questions about India, the English, Europe, Buonaparte, this world in general and the other one, hell and paradise, the soul, god, the devil, and a thousand things besides." Lord Auckland's Chief Secretary, W. Macnaghten, wrote in 1838 that the Maharaja "passed from war to wine, and from learning to hunting with breathless rapidity". Yet like his celebrated predecessors he was illiterate! In his service there were Hindus, Muslims, as well as Europeans, besides,—all chosen on merit. His personal secretary and confidant, like that of Shivaji, was a Muslim (Fakir Azizuddin). Among his generals were Europeans of all nationalities, like Allard, Ventura, Avitebile and several others. "The artillery of the Sikhs was much better than that of the Marathas... Ranjit Singh had foundries of his own where

guns were cast within Lahore Fort as well 'as...at Shah Dera.' Ranjit's Finance Minister was a Hindu (non-Sikh)—Raja Dina Nath; and "both during and after the lifetime of Ranjit Singh his influence over the Sikh *sardars*" was very great. He enjoyed the full confidence of his master, and in later years of the British Government, who, on the annexation of the Punjab, appointed him to the Council of Regency, where his experience and skill as a revenue officer rendered his services of great value". (Payne). The total revenue of the Punjab under Ranjit Singh was nearly $2\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees, $\frac{5}{6}$ of which was derived from land-revenue (which was $\frac{2}{5}$ of the annual produce).

In personal matters, Ranjit Singh was quite simple; yet contemporary European witnesses were struck with his "penetrating look, the restlessness of his fiery eye, which seemed to drive into the thoughts of the person he conversed with, and the rapidity of his laconic but searching questions, denoting the activity of his mind and his insatiable curiosity". (Prinsep). "Towards the end of his life," writes C. H. Payne, "even Ranjit Singh found it difficult to control the diversified and antagonistic elements of which his Court was composed; and when the reins of government passed from his hands to those of his incompetent successor, order speedily gave way to anarchy and bloodshed. The army became supreme, and the rival princes and politicians who endeavoured to buy its support succeeded only in driving it and themselves farther and farther along the road to destruction." But, as Dr. N. K. Sinha very pertinently observes, "An Indian chieftain who could secure the support of all sections of his people—Sikhs, Hindus and Muhammadans,—who could defend the North-Western frontier against a powerful Afghanistan and unruly border tribes, and administer it successfully, who could train an army whose fighting qualities came as a revelation to his famous opponents, who could to a certain extent furnish Indian nationalism with what it greatly needs—a tradition of strength—must always stand in the forefront of great men of Indian History."

It is tempting to compare the rise and decline of the Sikhs with the rise and fall of the Marathas. The former attempted on a limited scale and canvas what the latter did on a larger field and over a longer stretch of time. Both represented the Hindu reaction to the challenge of Islam. Both were militant and owed their initial inspirations to religion. Both were socially democratising movements owing to the levelling influences of Nanak and the saints of Maharashtra. They resembled each other in their military organisation and tactics. Deriving their main

strength from their light cavalry, both were invincible as guerillas, but later adopted the modern technique and weapons of the West without mastering the secrets of the success of Europeans. But the contrast between the two is equally striking. The Sikhs failed to produce such a long succession of leaders as did the Marathas. Hence the Sikh power suffered a sudden crash immediately after the death of the great Ranjit Singh. It was, like the rise and fall of Thebes, in ancient Greece, a one man show: Thebes rose and fell with Epaminondas; so did the Punjab with Ranjit Singh.

The 'Lion of the Punjab' was followed by lesser men. They displayed wreckless courage without collective wisdom. We need not dwell on the anarchy that brought about the rapid overthrow of the Sikhs as a political entity even in their own province. When chaos threatened to overflow the banks of the Sutlej into the British Protectorate, early in 1845, war seemed inevitable between the Sikhs and the English. It actually broke out when the Khalsa crossed the 'Rubicon' on 12th December 1845. The walls of Jerico' had been breached six years earlier by the welter of intrigues and murders that converted the Punjab into a seething cauldron. It is a tale, full of sound and fury, signifying only one thing, viz. that British intervention alone could save the Punjab, if not the Sikhs. Before the internal furies abated, in the course of half-a-dozen years, three of the successors of Ranjit Singh—Kharak Singh, Nao Nihal Singh, and Sher Singh—had been dispatched. In the final act of the tragedy, Rani Jindan (a widow of Ranjit Singh) was left on the royal stage with her infant son Dhulip. The more important ministers like Dhian Singh, his son Hera Singh, and the Rani's brother Jawahir Singh, and several others (all men of consequence) had been done to death. Next to the Rani and the young prince, among the survivors, were a few vascillating *sardars*; but the army dominated all. The policy of the Khalsa was no longer determined by the rulers, but dictated by its own *Panchayats*. Its keynote was anti-British. When Ranjit Singh died, his shrewd attitude of friendship towards the British, which was a source of strength to the nascent State, became the trump card of the weaker party or clique among the Sikhs, to be used only for the overthrow of its rivals. This suicidal policy was followed by both the Rani and the *sardars* in order to divert, if not get rid of, the dangerous Khalsa by inciting it into a war with the British, in the expectation that it might be destroyed or at least weakened. The *Khalsa*, on the other hand, felt encouraged—almost allured—by the disaster which the

British had recently met with in their Kabul adventure (see Note at the end of this chapter). The First Afghan War had ended in January 1842 in the complete annihilation of the English force: "On January 13, Dr. Brydon (the sole survivor out of 4,500 British, and 12,000 others) sorely wounded, and barely able from exhaustion to sit upon the emaciated beast that bore him, reached Jallalabad, and told that Elphinstone's army, guns, standards, honour, all being lost, was itself completely annihilated." The *Khalsa* felt elated that the British were so badly beaten even by the Afghans who had been several times before beaten by itself, at Peshawar and Jamrud. The cry of "*Wa! Guruji ka Khalsa! Wa! Guruji ki Fateh!*" was therefore again sounded: echoing '*Britannia delenda est!*' across the Sutlej.

Correct anticipation is half preparation. The British were already on the alert. They were almost mobilised to meet the situation. A few border incidents added fuel to the fire. While the Sikhs suspected British intentions, the British felt that they could not merely watch and wait. Politically and diplomatically they had half-encircled the Punjab. The conduct of Gulab Singh of Jammu, during and after the outbreak of hostilities, showed that the British had powerful friends within the Sikh State. "The frontier force of the British consisted of the three divisions at Ferozpur, Ludhiana, and Ambala, amounting in all to 30,000 men with 70 guns, and a reserve of 9,000 men and 26 guns at Meerut. General Sir John Littler commanded at Ferozpur; Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, was at Ambala; and the Governor-General himself was at Ludhiana." The first action took place at Mudki, on 18th December. The second was fought at Ferozshahr, three days later (21st to 22nd); the third, on 6th January, 1846, near Ludhiana; the fourth at Aliwal, on the 28th following and the fifth and last, at Sobraon, on 10th February. They were all hard fought battles, on both sides. The Sikhs won a "minor triumph" only at Ludhiana; but in the others their desperate courage and martial vigour were not in the end rewarded with victory. There was great slaughter on either side, but the Sikhs lost at least as many as the British. Some idea of the struggle may be gathered from the snapshots given below:

At Ferozshahr, Cunningham writes, "Regiments were mixed up with regiments, and officers with men, in the wildest confusion: generals were doubtful of the fact or the extent of their own success, and colonels knew not what had become of the regiments they commanded, or of the army of which they formed a part."

At Sobraon, "Fighting every inch of the ground, the Sikhs were forced back upon their bridge, which gave way; and the river, which was in flood, was filled with a struggling mass. The British artillery crashed down on the swollen waters; and as the triumph became full and manifest, the victors, defiled with dust and smoke and carnage, stood mute indeed for a moment, until the glory of their success rushing upon their minds, they gave expression to their feelings, and hailed their victorious commanders with reiterated shouts of triumph and congratulations".

So ended the First Sikh War. On 13th February, 1846, the British were encamped at Kasur, thirty-six miles from Lahore, "without another shot fired against them". The principal treaty was made at Lahore, on 9th March, by which the territory between the Sutlej and the Beas was made over to the British; an indemnity of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds sterling was imposed upon the State; and the *Khalsa* was considerably reduced in size. A second treaty was signed at Amritsar by Ghulab Singh, on 16th March, by which Kashmir was virtually sold to him and his heirs in perpetuity for seventy-five lakhs of rupees (the amount of the indemnity which Lahore had been unable to pay). Gulab Singh was a Dogra Rajput. He had begun life as an ordinary trooper on Rs 3 a month, in 1808. Now in 1846 he had become absolute monarch of Jammu and Kashmir, over a territory nearly 80,000 square miles in area. His brother Dhian Singh, and nephew Jawahir Singh, had both risen to be powerful ministers at Lahore, before they met with their tragic end in the anarchy. On 16th December, a final treaty was made at Bhairawal, by which a British Resident was appointed at Lahore; the administration of the Punjab was placed under a Council of Regency, composed of the leading *sardars* acting under the direction of the British Resident; and a British force was established in Lahore Fort. 22 lakhs were to be paid for the maintenance of this force, annually, to the British; and Rs. $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs annually to Rani Jindan for her maintenance. These arrangements were to terminate on 4th September 1854, when the young Maharaja would come of age. Lord Hardinge was so pleased and sanguine about this achievement that, when he left for England, in January 1848, he assured his successor, Lord Dalhousie, that so far as human foresight could predict, "it would not be necessary to fire a gun in India for seven years to come."

The optimism of Lord Hardinge, which was shared by contemporary newspapers of Bengal like *The Morning Herald* and *The Friend of India*, however, was not justified

by the events. Before three months had passed after Hardinge uttered his complacent prophecy, another conflagration started in the Punjab itself, which ended in the total annexation of that province by the British. The expectation of peace rested merely on the relative military strength of the victors and the vanquished in the late war. The strength of the *Khalsa* was reduced from 85,000 men and 350 guns to 24,000 men and 50 guns: whereas, after the peace, the British army numbered 70,000. Yet the irrepressible Sikhs had been defeated but not conquered. While the *Khalsa* was smarting under its reverses and repression, the Rani Jindan perfectly understood the situation and "went to work with new machinations of amorous and political intrigues". When the British Resident objected to the exhibition of "open treason" at her *darbars*, she replied with bitter irony, "scarcely deigning to use the veil of a Persian idiom to disguise her arrogant claims to the sovereign power." The tinder-box or powder magazine was set ablaze by the revolt of Diwan Mulraj, the Sikh Governor of Multan. Being called to account by the Resident, Mulraj pretended to tender his resignation. But when two young British officers—Vans Agnew of the Civil Service (aged 25) and Lieutenant Anderson (aged 28)—were sent to install his successor in Multan, they were treacherously murdered. "The annexation of the Punjab to the British Empire," states the inscription on their tomb, "was the result of the war, of which their assassination was the commencement."

We need not dwell on all the developments from stage to stage. While the Commander-in-Chief, General Gough, was reluctant to march post-haste to the rescue, on account of the hot season (April, 1848), a young subaltern, Lieut. Edwardes, who was at Bannu, rushed to the scene of the tragedy—"like a terrier barking at a tiger"—and after cutting his way through heavy odds, gallantly fought and retrieved the situation as best he could. Meanwhile, what appeared to be only a local rising had developed into a national revolt of the Sikhs all over the Punjab; nay more, they had called in the Afghans (willingly sent by Dost Muhammad) as their allies. The situation looked desperate; yet, as the dying Agnew and Anderson declared: "We are not the last of the English", they ultimately came in strength to finish the job. Though at first Lord Gough had treated the business "as if the rebellion could be put off like a champagne tiffin with a three-cornered note to Mulraj, to name a date more agreeable", Edwardes demanded prompt assistance: "a few heavy guns, a mortar battery, sappers and miners, and Major Napier to head them, are

all we want". Eventually more than these arrived. Three armies marched into the Punjab: one from Bombay, another from Sind, and a third under the Governor-General himself from Bengal: while Lord Gough moved at last from the cool retreat of Simla and went into precipitate action. "His tardiness to start," writes W. W. Hunter, "was equalled by his rashness in the field."

Edwardes had equally rashly laid siege to the impregnable 'fortress-warehouse' of Multan. It was commenced on 4th September 1848. "But even with the united British force from Lahore and Ferozpur, together with the subsidiary Sikh troops supplied by the Residency under Raja Sher Singh, it was found impracticable to attempt the place by storm". So, on 15th September, the siege was raised, and the British troops were drawn off to a position of safety. As the Council of War admitted: "the question before it was no longer the capture of Multan, but the safety of our own camp". Nevertheless, with the arrival of troops and *materiel* from all sides, the siege was renewed on 27th December, and on 2nd January, 1849, the city was captured; the citadel surrendered twenty days later, "after 40,000 shot and shell had been poured into Multan".

Nine days before the fall of Multan, however, the British under their Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gough, had met with a disaster the like of which they had not experienced anywhere else, at any rate in India. The battle of Chillianwala, fought on the fatal 13th of January 1849, was, in the words of Hunter, "fought by a brave old man in a passion, and mourned for by the whole British nation". Gough confessed: "Indeed, I had not intended to attack today, but the impudent rascals fired on me. They put my Irish blood up, and I attacked them". The combat lasted hardly three hours; but the onslaught was terrific. "33 officers, 53 sergeants or havildars, 511 common soldiers had fallen dead, 104 sergeants were missing, few of whom returned alive; while the wounded came up to 94 officers or havildars, and 1466 men and other ranks. Besides this fearful loss, unequalled in the record of Indian battles, 4 guns belonging to the troops of Huish and Christie, and 5 or 6 colours borne by the 24th foot, the 25th, 30th and 56th native infantry, remaining in the Company's hands". The Sikhs were highly elated though their losses in killed and wounded were equally heavy. But the news of the capitulation of Multan acted like soothing balm, or even tonic, to the shaken nerves of the British. They not only recovered from the shock but turned the scales on the Sikhs at Gujarat, on 21st February 1849. In this final and decisive battle, though the Sikh gunners fought with their accustomed skill and hardi-

hood, "in quickness of fire surpassing, in truth of aim very nearly equalling, the world-famous artillerymen of Bengal and Bombay", their efforts were unavailing against the more numerous and heavier guns of their assailants. The Sikhs were routed, and on the morning after the battle a pursuing force of 12,000 men—horse, foot, and artillery—under General Sir Walter Gilbert, continued the chase. On 12th March 1849, General Gilbert received the submission of the entire Sikh army at Rawalpindi. The Afghan horsemen who had come to the assistance of the Sikhs, it was said, "had ridden down through the hills like lions and ran back into them like dogs". The triumph of the English was indeed conclusive. "If our enemies want war," Lord Dalhousie had declared on his arrival, "war they shall have, and with a vengeance." "There is no other course open to us," he wrote to the Secret Committee, "but to prepare for a general Punjab War, and ultimately to occupy the country". This he had now achieved. Maharaja Dhulip Singh was provided for by a pension of £50,000 a year, and he retired to England, like the deposed Raja of Coorg, to live there as a country gentleman.

The annexation of the Punjab completed the work which Wellesley had commenced fifty years earlier. It was approved by the Court of Directors, the Parliament, and the English nation; and with legitimate pride and satisfaction, Dalhousie declared: "While deeply sensible of the responsibility I have assumed, I have an undoubting conviction of the expediency, the justice, and the necessity of my act. What I have done, I have done with a clear conscience, and in the honest belief that it was imperatively demanded of me by my duty to the State." His other annexations (excluding Sikkim and Lower Burma) were mostly by the application of the familiar and facile doctrine of 'lapse'; these were Oudh, Bhagat, Sambhalpur, Jaitpur, Udaipur (now called Chhota Udaipur), Jhansi, Satara, the Berars and part of Khandesh, with which Dalhousie filled in the lacunae in the map of British India. He is appropriately described by W. W. Hunter as "the second builder of the temple of British Rule in India", the first being Wellesley. More about his work in the next and later sections.

A few reflections on the disappearance of the Punjab as an independent State cannot be out of place. The little kingdom of Paurava (between the Jhelum and the Chenab) was among the first called upon to face the onslaught of European Imperialism represented by Alexander the Great, in the fourth century B.C. It is related that Poros (as the Greeks called the ruler of that place) though defeated, after

a gallant fight, demanded a "royal" treatment at the hands of the conqueror, and Alexander with magnanimity reinstated him. Poros thereafter remained loyal to his western suzerain. Likewise, the Sikhs, though defeated after a gallant fight (in the First Sikh War), were reinstated by the last of the European conquerors of India, with the statesmanship of an Alexander; and, though it took the Sikhs another salutary lesson (that of the Second Sikh War) to drive home to them the necessity, forever remained loyal to the British, with the gratitude of a Poros. The following observations on them, by a British historian, might appropriately close these reflections:—

"The splendid bravery and the fervid patriotism displayed by the Sikhs throughout the Punjab wars," writes C. H. Payne, "will always be remembered by the British with admiration and respect... They embarked on the first Sikh war in the belief that the British were meditating the annihilation of the Khalsa. Their defeat laid their kingdom prostrate at the feet of the British Government; but the latter, instead of annihilating it, employed every means in its power to give it life, strength and permanence... But the Sikhs gave no thought to the future. They were conscious only that an alien hand was usurping their powers, restricting their liberties, and disbanding their armies... The measures of the new administration galled them, not because they were strange and irksome, but because they were imposed by a foreign hand. The remedy seemed worse than the disease; and hence the Sikhs banded themselves together to oppose the only system which could possibly save their kingdom. The second Sikh war was an even greater blunder than the first—greater because irretrievable".

4. *'Subordinate Union'*

The process of building up the British Empire in India commenced with Clive's victories in the Carnatic in the middle of the eighteenth century (Arcot, 1751), and culminated in the annexations of Dalhousie in the middle of the nineteenth century (1849-56). Indian independence came to be recognised as from 15th August 1947. The story of the British Empire in this country, therefore, covers a period of approximately two centuries: during the first of these the territorial conquests were completed, with the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 (the Burmese wars and consequent annexations thereof are treated in this volume as part of British 'foreign policy' for obvious reasons); during the second the only annexations made were those effected by Dalhousie in pursuance of his doctrine of 'lapse'.

These latter were not the outcome of military conquest, but resulted from the assertion of the political suzerainty of the British East India Company acting with the sanction of the British Crown and Parliament. The impolicy, if not the injustice, of such annexation by 'lapse', however, was soon realised; and after Dalhousie the political map of India was allowed to remain unchanged. The failure of heirs or misgovernment by the ruler of a 'Native or Protected State' was not made an excuse for its permanent merger in British India. Nevertheless, the relations between the Princes and the Paramount Power were re-defined. These new relations are described by Lee-Warner as making for the 'subordinate union' of the Princedom with the British Imperial system. An examination of the cases of 'lapse' under Dalhousie will provide us with the best 'conduit' towards the correct understanding of the 'subordinate union'.

The States that passed under direct British sway by 'lapse' were (1) Satara in 1848, (2) and (3) Jaitpur and Sambhalpur in 1849, (4) Bhagat in 1850, (5) Udaipur (now called Chhota Udaipur) in 1852, (6) Jhansi in 1853, and Nagpur in 1854. Besides these Karauli, a minor State in Rajputana, escaped a similar fate (in 1852) "largely because Henry Lawrence, then Agent for Rajputana, pleaded on its behalf". All these annexations were effected more because the advantages of such a policy outweighed the disadvantages, rather than for considerations of right and wrong. It is of little importance to us whether Dalhousie was personally responsible in each case or that he was merely carrying out a policy predetermined for him by his predecessors and the authorities in England. In the opinion of W. W. Hunter, "Lord Dalhousie was neither a doctrinaire innovator, nor a passive instrument in the hand of fate." Nevertheless A. D. Innes states the bare truth when he observes, "There was fully adequate precedent for every one of his annexations. But his predecessors had acted on the general principles of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately". This view is fully corroborated by Dalhousie's own enunciation of his policy: "The British government," he said, "in the exercise of a wise and sound policy is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves, whether they arise from the lapse of subordinate States by the failure of all heirs of every description whatsoever, or from the failure of heirs natural where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the Government being given

to the ceremony of adoption, according to Hindu Law. The Government is bound, in duty as well as in policy, to act on every such occasion with the purest integrity, and in the most scrupulous observance of good faith. When even a shadow of doubt can be shown, the claim should at once be abandoned." It is the duty of the historians to record that the excellent sentiment of the proviso was not implemented satisfactorily in each case. We can find space only for a few glaring instances.

There were two ostensible grounds of annexation under Dalhousie: (i) refusal to recognise adoption on the failure of natural heirs; and (ii) misrule by a native prince. Super-session in each case was justified by the claim of Suzerainty or Paramountcy. During the period of the 'ring-fence' and 'subordinate isolation', the Indian princes were considered to be independent within their own States, but were precluded more and more from acting independently in their foreign relations (i.e., with Europeans other than the English, and other Indian States). Adoption was an ancient right, and seldom objected to even by the Paramount Company which had not infrequently interfered with succession on other grounds, prior to 1834. Then it was laid down that such an "indulgence should be the exception, not the rule, and should never be granted but as a special mark of favour and approbation". In 1841, the Government of India further declared its deliberate policy "to persevere in the one clear and direct course of abandoning no just and honourable accession of territory or revenue, while all existing claims of right are at the same time scrupulously respected."

According to Sir Charles Jackson (whilom Advocate-General of Bengal): "When the Hindu is a prince holding his principality subordinate to, or a gift from, a paramount state, it is a condition of succession to the principality that the adoption be made with the consent of such paramount state. His private property will pass to the adopted son, whether the paramount state has or has not consented to the adoption; but in the absence of such consent, the principality reverts to the paramount state." Though this was quite correct in ancient theory, contemporary practice was contented with exacting a *nazarana* or succession duty (involving in some cases reduction of territory, but never escheat or total confiscation). Dalhousie insisted on the application of the extreme interpretation of the theory, ignoring the modified practice among Indian States. His decisive criterion in such cases was not "scrupulous respect for rights" but political policy or expediency. In the case of Karauli, for instance, Dalhousie wrote: "It is not worth

creating any alarm about; and perhaps after all it may be politic to let alone these Rajput states, even though we have strict right on our side..." Referring to Colonel Low's plea for recognition of the Karauli adoption on grounds of policy, Dalhousie declared: "On the question of right, I would not have deferred to him; on the question of policy as regards Rajputana I do not wish to insist upon my opinion against his."

In his minute of 28th January 1854, Dalhousie classed the Indian States as being "tributary and subordinate, of our own creation or independent. In the first case he considered that our assent was necessary to an adoption, in the second case that adoption should not be allowed, while in the third case we had no right to interfere". (C.H.I.). Satara, Jhansi, and Nagpur came under the second category: "the offspring of our gratuitous benevolence". We cannot go into all these cases *in extenso*. Satara should suffice as an illustration.

The Raja of Satara was a descendant of the great Shivaji. When the last of the Peshvas, Bajirao II, was pensioned and his territories confiscated in 1818, Satara was deliberately constituted into a protected principality in order to placate Maratha sentiment. That expediency enabled the British "to huddle the war (with the Marathas) to a finish". But later on, when the English position became unassailable, they had second thoughts. On 30th January 1837, Sir Robert Grant, Governor of Bombay, wrote: "An opinion is now very commonly entertained that the erection of Satara into a separate principality was a mistaken proceeding. It is at least clear that this principality includes the finest part of the Deccan, and by its position most awkwardly breaks the continuity of the British territory. There are those, therefore, who will hail the present crisis as affording an excellent opportunity of repairing the error alluded to, by pulling down the inconvenient pageant we have erected". This was actually done in 1848, when the next ruler died without a natural heir. Dalhousie refused to recognise his adopted son, as no previous permission had been obtained for the adoption. In any case it was a prejudged affair. Even before the Raja's death, as a matter of fact, when he was in his death-bed, Sir John Hobhouse, President of the Board of Control, had already declared: "I have a very strong opinion that, on the death of the present prince without a son, *no adoption should be permitted*, and his petty principality should be merged in the British Empire".

The implementation of this policy by Dalhousie gave a great shock to Princely India. "The confidence of our

Native allies," writes Sir John Low, a member of Dalhousie's Council, "was a good deal shaken by the annexation of Satara." Elphinstone regarded the treatment accorded to Satara as "a monstrous one"; "but any opinion of the injustice done to this family was subordinate to the alarm which he felt at the dangerous principles which were advanced, affecting every sovereign state in India." Two other Maratha principalities, Jhansi and Nagpur, suffered a similar fate (1853-4) adding considerably to the profit and convenience of the British Empire. The Central Provinces created out of the territories of the Raja of Nagpur (comprising 80,000 sq. miles) gave the Company an additional revenue of Rs. 40,00,000, and also served to enclose Hyderabad in a 'ring-fence'. It linked up Calcutta with Bombay by a direct road running all through British territory, and, in short, as Lee-Warner put it: "combined our military strength, enlarged our commercial resources, and materially tended to consolidate our power".

We need not dwell long on the minor annexations of Dalhousie. They were scattered all over India: in the Punjab, in Sind, Orissa, Bundelkhand, Khandesh, etc. Among them we might also include the abolition of "titular sovereignties" like those of the Nawab of Carnatic, the Raja of Tanjore, and the Peshva. Their titles and allowances were terminated on the failure of natural heirs. In some cases (e.g. Nagpur and Carnatic), as P. E. Roberts has marked, "The public auction of jewels and furniture of the royal house, which made such an unfortunate impression, was a tactless blunder and one that might well have been avoided." The escheats of Bhagat, a Cis-Sutlej hill State, and Udaipur (M.P.) were later reversed by Canning, Dalhousie's successor. In the case of Bhawalpur, a Muslim State, Dalhousie desisted from intervention in spite of a disputed succession resulting in civil war and ending in the success of the rebellious rival (1852). Similarly towards the Nizam who was greatly in arrears in the payment of the subsidiary force, Dalhousie was content with taking over the Berars, but retaining the nominal sovereignty of the Nizam over them, because he was an "ancient ally" of the British. His infatuation for the Muslim rulers, arising from gratitude for their "ancient loyalty" seemed to be particularly misplaced in the case of the Nawab of Oudh. He was no doubt the first of the Protected Princes to protect British territory from the outer flood of the Marathas, since the time of Warren Hastings. Lord Hastings had derived the greatest benefit from him during his operations against Nepal. But unfortunately for their subjects, the rule of successive Nawabs of that province

had been a protracted agony for over half-a-century. In the picturesque language of Thompson and Garratt: "Oudh's administration was an orgy of massacre and corruption set to music". Nevertheless, Dalhousie declared: "I for my part do not advocate the advice that the province of Oudh be declared British territory." Yet, finally, the annexation of Oudh was carried out, on 13th February, 1856, in spite of Dalhousie's inexplicable reluctance, by order of the Directors at home. Dalhousie acquiesced in the execution because, in his own words, "the British Government would be guilty in the sight of God and man, if it were any longer to aid in sustaining by its countenance an administration fraught with suffering to millions".

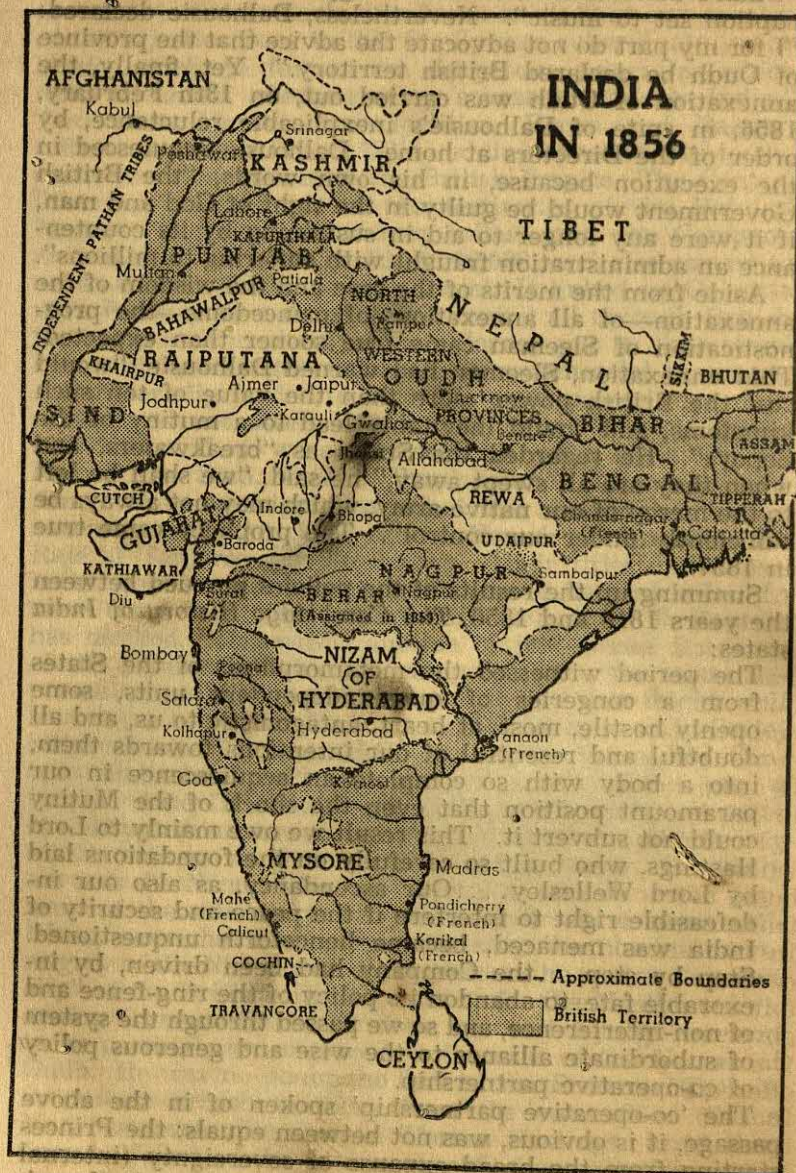
Aside from the merits of the case and the wisdom of the annexation—of all annexations of princedoms—the prognostication of Sleeman came true sooner than expected: That annexation, Sleeman had warned Dalhousie, "would cost the British power more than the value of ten such kingdoms, and would inevitably lead to a mutiny of the Sepoys". He regarded the States as "breakwaters, and when they are all swept away," he said, "we shall be left to the mercy of our native army, which may not always be sufficiently under our control". The prophecy came true in 1857.

Summing up the results of the policies pursued between the years 1818 and 1856, *The Cambridge History of India* states:

The period witnessed the metamorphosis of the States from a congeries of quasi-independent units, some openly hostile, most, at heart, antagonistic to us, and all doubtful and resentful of our intentions towards them, into a body with so complete an acquiescence in our paramount position that even the shock of the Mutiny could not subvert it. This result we owe mainly to Lord Hastings, who built so carefully on the foundations laid by Lord Wellesley.... Our ascendancy, as also our indefeasible right to interfere if the peace and security of India was menaced, became henceforth unquestioned. Step by step,... the Company had been driven, by inexorable fate, to abandon its policy of the ring-fence and of non-interference, and so we passed through the system of subordinate alliance to the wise and generous policy of co-operative partnership.

The 'co-operative partnership' spoken of in the above passage, it is obvious, was not between equals: the Princes starting from the broad expanse of sovereignty (internal and external), had by now entered into the safe though dependent position of subordinate union, passing through

the collapsing gateways of the ring-fence and subordinate isolation. The gate-keeper, it is not to be forgotten, was the



British Resident who had always at his beck and call the

subsidiary force stationed near enough as the sword of Damocles. Even as early as 1818, a treaty negotiated with the Maharana of Udaipur (the premier Rajput State), stipulated that "the Maha-Rana will *always act in subordinate co-operation* with the British Government and will not have any connection with other Chiefs of States," and that "the troops of Udaipur shall be furnished according to its means at the requisition of the British Government". Another treaty with Satara in 1819 declared: "The Raja will ultimately have the entire management of the country. . . . he will, however, *at all times attend to the advice which the Political officer may offer to him for the good of the State and the maintenance of general tranquillity.*" These treaties illustrated how the Company was assuming increasing responsibilities even within the States. Even the non-interventionist Bentinck sequestered the government of Mysore, in 1831, on grounds of maladministration by its Raja (installed by Wellesley in 1799). "Lord William Bentinck," says Roberts, "afterwards came to believe that he had been to some extent misled by exaggerated reports of oppression in Mysore, but the Company declined to reverse the sequestration". When the restoration actually took place in 1881, under Ripon, "very stringent regulations were made to prevent the country losing the benefits of British rule which it had enjoyed for half a century. All laws in force at the time were to be maintained, no material change in the system of government was to be made without the consent of the Governor-General in Council, all settlements of land revenue to be maintained, and the Raja was to conform to such advice as the Governor-General might give him on details of administration." Beggars, indeed, cannot be choosers even when they happen to be royal and political.

The fate of the Nawabs of the Carnatic and Bengal, in whose territories the British had first acquired their foothold, overtook ultimately the Mughal Emperor himself from whom the Company had acquired the Diwani in 1765. In 1803, the blind old Shah Alam had come into British custody. In 1813, Lord Hastings expressed his fixed determination to make an end of "the fiction of the Mogul government". The phrase denoting the Imperial supremacy was removed from his seal. No more ceremonial gifts were offered to the Emperor in the Governor-General's name. . . . In 1835, the coinage of Bengal ceased to be struck in the name of the dead Emperor, Shah Alam, whose titles had continued to appear on the Company's rupees till that year. Then it was resolved to induce the Imperial family to remove from the old palace at Delhi to a new residence. . . .

near the Kutb Minar, and at last Canning decided no longer to recognise the Imperial title after the demise of the existing Emperor, Bahadur Shah.' After the Great Rising of 1857, the Emperor was put on trial "for rebellion against the East India Company", deposed and deported to Rangoon, as a State-prisoner, to sigh away his last days like Napoleon in St. Helena. "The British Government became both in form and in substance supreme as well as sovereign in India." The Maratha claims to suzerainty or sovereignty, too, had been liquidated by the subordination of all its chiefs to the Paramountcy of the British, and the deposition of the Peshva in 1818. On the death of Bajirao II, the last Peshva, at Bithur, in 1851, his title and pension were alike terminated.

Among the claimants to such sovereignty in India to be likewise terminated during the period "when history, as it were, paused and took breath for another flight", was the East India Company itself. Its extinction in the Great Rising of 1857, and the assumption of the complete sovereignty of India by the British Crown and Parliament, in 1858, was accompanied by an assurance to the Princes of India that their thrones and successions were guaranteed to them subject only to the British Paramountcy, which was "undefined and undefinable, but always tending to expand under the strong pressure of circumstances". This was as much the result of second thoughts on Dalhousie's doctrine of 'lapse' as a recognition of the unmistakable loyalty demonstrated by the princes during the late crisis. The silken ties thus created were further strengthened by the golden embroidery of Queen Victoria's *darbar* in 1877, announcing Her Majesty's assumption of the title of 'Empress of India'. Its implication of the conversion of 'allies' into 'subjects' was perhaps not fully realised by our bamboozled princes. It was like the conversion of the semi-independent feudal nobility of France into the wholly dependent courtiers of Louis XIV. "The native Chief," declared Lord Curzon, in his speech at Gwalior in 1899, "has become by our policy an integral factor in the Imperial organisation of India. He is not less concerned than the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor in the administration of the country". The princes were caught in a noose of titles, honours, and salutes; and they vied with one another in the display of pomp and loyalty to the British Crown. At the same time the 'subordinate union' of their States was progressively consolidated through channels that seemed inevitable. By treaties, agreements, precedents, understandings and implications, Princely India was subtly integrated with 'British India' regarding currency, railways,

posts and telegraphs, customs, irrigation, cantonments, etc. "Railways," wrote Sir Edwin Arnold in 1865, "may do for India what dynasties have never done—what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not effect by government, nor the cruelty of Tipu Sahib by violence—they may make India a nation."

5. Non-Intervention

In the preceding pages we have more than once referred to the policy of 'non-intervention', while all along we dwelt mainly on the opposite policy of conquest and expansion of British dominion in India. A more strictly chronological narrative would have shown how the two policies were actually linked up as nights are with days, alternating with a striking regularity. Periods of activity were punctuated with interludes of 'masterly inactivity' during which, however, the gains of the previous day were carefully secured, as a tired person quietly recuperates himself in the night's rest.

Though the East India Company was transformed into rulers it had not shed its character as a commercial corporation. Even when Parliamentary control over it was established, the exigencies of party-politics in England and the inevitable jealousy towards British subjects acquiring or exercising increasing political authority and responsibilities over vast tracts in India, tended to put a curb on inclinations that had recently involved the Company in several expensive wars: e.g., the Rohilla War, the First Anglo-Maratha War, and the two Anglo-Mysore Wars. The Regulating Act of 1773 having failed to effectively check such proclivities on the part of the scattered Presidencies, the Pitt's India Act of 1784 more imperatively laid down that:

Forasmuch as to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation, it shall not be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to declare war, or to enter into any treaty for making war, or for guaranteeing the possessions of any country princes or states (except where hostilities against the British nation in India have been actually commenced or prepared), without express command and authority from the home government.

The Presidency authorities were also more imperatively brought under the central control of the Governor-General and Council, so as to ensure a uniform policy. Lord Cornwallis was sent out to India expressly to implement this policy and to set right the machinery which had gone awry under Warren Hastings. Yet, as we witnessed, the new

Governor-General could not desist from hostilities almost immediately after his arrival in Calcutta. The Mysore war brought considerable accession of territory, and, as Lyall observed, "such was the confidence in the good intentions of Cornwallis that when he left India in 1793 there was a general impression in England that he had merely taken *the necessary steps for inaugurating a pacific and stationary policy*. Whereas in fact we were on the threshold of an era of wide-ranging hostilities and immense annexations." The immediate consequence of bringing India under direct Parliamentary control, he further points out was "to stimulate, not to slacken, the expansion of our territories... For the last hundred years every important annexation in India has been made under the sanction and the deliberate orders of the national government of England".

Cornwallis' immediate successor was Sir John Shore (1793-98) than whom there was not a more genuine 'pacifist' among the Governors-General of India. No better certificate of this could be had than the fact that the British Napoleon, Wellesley, had an unconcealed contempt for him. He spoke of Shore's "indolence and timidity" which "contributed to relax every spring of this government from one extremity of the Empire to the other." It was a "folly" according to him to have appointed Sir John as Governor-General, for he "established a systematical degradation of the person, dignity and authority of the Governor-General". Shore, on retirement from India, more appropriately engaged himself in evangelical activities. Yet, before his departure, he had been made a peer, as Lord Teignmouth, in appreciation of his services in Oudh which we shall presently describe.

The first case of intervention, despite the non-interventionist intentions of Sir John Shore, came up in the Carnatic, on account of the death of Muhammad Ali on 13th October, 1795. Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras, "proposed to assume the whole military and civil administration of the districts pledged for the payment of the tribute, and... the sovereignty over the Poligars and of some specified forts." But Umdat-ul-Umara, Muhammad Ali's successor, "sat tight", and Hobart threatened to coerce him by the annexation of Tinnevely. Sir John Shore, however, considered such action "impolitic, unauthorised, and unjust." So the execution of the plan had to be delayed until a more favourable opportunity was found. It presented itself under the next Governor-General, Wellesley. Hobart in the meanwhile found another channel for his energetic inclinations in the annexation of the Dutch East Indies (1896), as war had broken out between England

and Holland. He also "dragooned" Tanjore, "the unhappy State which was the South Indian equivalent of Oudh, into a treaty foreshadowing its speedy annexation". Another event showing the expansion of the Company's affairs was an embassy to Burma. (Thompson and Garratt).

In 1795, when the Nizam feared an attack from his formidable neighbours, the Marathas, and asked for military assistance from the English, Sir John Shore, taking shelter under the 'taboos' of the Pitt's India Act, left him in the lurch. But when the Nizam, smarting under his defeat at the hands of the Marathas (at Kharda, 1795) and his betrayal by the English, turned to the French for the means of his recovery and safety, "Sir John Shore at once interposed to prevent him". (Lyall). This inconsistency in adherence to the avowed doctrine of 'non-intervention' was again evidenced by Sir John Shore's treatment of the Nawab of Oudh. In 1797, when the Afghan Zaman Shah captured Lahore, it was feared that he might repeat the exploits of Ahmad Shah Durrani. If he were so inclined, the conditions in Oudh might certainly have at once tempted him and made it easy to carry out his designs. There was more than 'something rotten in the state of Denmark'. The death of Nawab Asaf-ud-daula, in 1797, and the usual troubles regarding succession, seemed to make matters worse. Sir John Shore, therefore, decided to intervene in the affairs of Oudh. He recognised Wazir Ali, an illegitimate son of Asaf-ud-daula's, as the Nawab. But the case did not prove to be so simple as that. "Ali was surrounded by a gang of miscreants". The Governor-General, consequently, changed his mind and thought of reversing his decision. Despite the warnings of his commander-in-chief, who apprehended a serious outbreak, Sir John, seated on an elephant, boldly entered Lucknow and deposing Wazir Ali, installed his uncle, Sa'dat, in his place. The new Nawab signed a fresh treaty which considerably strengthened the English power. The terms of the treaty included "an increase to seventy-six lakhs of the annual payment to the Company by the Wazir of Oudh; the placing of an English garrison in the great city of Allahabad; the increase of British troops to 10,000, who were given the exclusive charge of the defence of the country; and the strict limitation of the Wazir's own troops; and finally the Nawab agreed to have no dealings with other powers without the consent of the English." As *The Cambridge History* observes: "The treaty may have been necessary and just; but it was certainly a departure from the policy, if not the principles, associated with its author." In March 1798, Sir John Shore (now made Lord Teignmouth) "drifted

out of the Governor-Generalship as listlessly as he had drifted through it. India was ready for a Wellesley."

But Wellesley "was going too fast and too far," as Monson's disaster indicated, "and the nation at large was startled by his grandiose reports of Indian wars, conquests, and prodigious accessions of territories." These had the same effect as Dupleix's similar dispatches to Paris. And just as the truth was brought home to the French authorities through English sources on the former occasion, so, at least in one unfortunate affair, England got the first information, not from the dispatches of Wellesley but from the French newspaper, the *Moniteur* of Paris: it was about the declaration of war on Holkar in April, 1805; Wellesley's official communication home was not dispatched from Calcutta till August, and the ship that carried the important news was captured *en route* by the French. "Lord Wellesley had spent vast sums of money on his campaigns and annexations," writes Lyall, "reporting these important acts to the Directors (who were constitutionally his superiors) many months after the whole business had ended." The Directors consequently considered Wellesley's wars "a vexatious and painful interruption of tranquillity" and recalled him.

Cornwallis who was sent out for a second time to India to retrieve the desperate situation (as at any rate the Directors thought) "found an empty treasury, an increasing debt, the export trade of the Company arrested by the demand of specie for the military chest, and the British ascendancy openly proclaimed and in process of enforcement by ways and means that evidently involved us in a rapidly expanding circle of fresh political liabilities." But Cornwallis died within three months of his arrival here, declaring: "Where the tree falls there let it lie". Another 'King Log' was found to succeed him, in Sir George Barlow, Cornwallis' senior councillor. Under him "the English proclaimed an intention of living apart from broils, of dissociating themselves from the general concerns of India at large, and of improving their own property without taking part in the quarrels or grievances of their neighbours". In pursuance of this negative policy, Barlow abandoned the subsidiary arrangements with Shinde that Wellesley had projected, and gave Holkar (who had been driven into the Punjab by General Lake) more generous terms than he had reason to expect. The Rajputs were thereby left to the tender mercies of the Marathas and the Pindaris, pathetically pleading for British protection in vain. Yet in the cases of the Nizam and the Peshva, Barlow refused to go back on the policy of Wellesley. "He declined to allow

the Nizam freedom to indulge in anti-English intrigues, and he rejected a suggestion from England to modify the position of the Peshva under the Treaty of Bassein".

Lord Minto, who succeeded Barlow, is chiefly of interest because of his widespread diplomatic activities. Internally, he "tightened up Government when it had been rendered intolerably lax, and yet there was no return to the bullying arrogance of Lord Wellesely". His only annexation within India was that of Serampur, in 1808, owing to the war between England and Denmark. He waged a war on the decoits of East Bengal and suppressed them. Likewise he carried on minor operations against the Pindaris in Bundelkhand, and crushed a revolt in Travancore. For the sake of religious non-intervention with the beliefs of the 'Gentooes', he also suppressed the offensive propaganda of the Christian missionaries in the Company's territories. His most important achievement was the treaty with Ranjit Singh, which was negotiated by Charles Metcalfe, in 1809, at Amritsar. It made for peace with the Sikhs for the next thirty years, and converted a source of potential danger on the western frontier into a firm ally and bulwark against the Afghans.

After Minto once again the 'forward' policy was renewed by Lord Moira (the Marquess of Hastings). To a certain extent that change was already prepared for by his predecessor who steered a middle course between the two extremes of Wellesley and Barlow. As Sir John Malcolm observed: Minto brought about "a progressive return to a course of action more suited to the extent, the character, and the condition of the British power; . . . a gradual change was thus effected in the minds of his superiors in England, and this change tended in no small degree to facilitate the attainment of the advantages which have accrued from the more active and brilliant administration of his successor." We have noticed in an earlier section of this chapter the important contributions made by Lord Hastings to the building up of the British Empire. The only event of any interest to us in the regime of Amherst (Hastings' successor) was the taking of Bharatpur by Lord Cambermere. His war with Burma is referred to elsewhere. Lord William Bentick, who came after Amherst, was the last adherent of the policy of 'non-intervention'. He is better known for his internal reforms than for actions regarding external relations with other States. His annexation of Coorg, Kachar, and Jaintia have been alluded to before. Of greater importance was his assumption, though temporary, of the administration of Mysore. Even this he regretted on second thoughts. His vacillating policy was responsible for

much confusion in several parts of India. V. A. Smith has thus summarised the situation created by Bentinck's lack of firmness:

In Oudh the reforming minister, Hakim Mehdi, was deserted by the British government, and driven from the kingdom. The Nizam's dominions were permitted to fall into disorder; support to the infant Holkar was refused, with a like result; and dangerous quarrels were allowed to develop in Gwalior. The Gaikwar assumed an attitude of open hostility. The Rajput States were almost encouraged to engage in civil war; the improvements in Udaipur were checked, and the prosperity of the State created by Tod and his fellow labourers rapidly declined; at Jaipur, the policy of the Governor-General, after exhibiting the extremes of interference and of abstinence from interference, terminated in a catastrophe which was wholly unprecedented, and which was followed by a still closer and more authoritative connection.

Sir Charles Metcalfe, who acted as Governor-General (1835-6) on the resignation of Lord Bentinck, laconically described the policy of 'non-intervention' as involving "disgrace without compensation, treaties without security, and peace without tranquillity". The British, he said, could no longer hope to "insulate themselves" against the surrounding flood, and merely "preach to the roaring ocean to be still". As Lyall expressed it: "By swift means or slow, by fair means or forcible, the British dominion was certain to expand, and the armed opposition of its rivals could not fail to be beaten down at each successive collision with a growing European power... Our policy might vary, backward or forward; we still found ourselves mounting step by step up to the high office of ultimate arbiter in every dispute and supreme custodian of the peace of all India".

NOTE: BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

In the preceding two chapters we have given an account of the advent of Europeans in India and their rivalries ultimately resulting in the establishment of the British Empire. The keen struggle between the French and the English for world supremacy was carried on in India as well. But the triumph of the latter everywhere in the Seven Years' War put an end to direct conflict between the two so far as India was concerned. Yet, as we noted, Frenchmen served in the armies of Mahadji Shinde, Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, and the Nizam, and French diplomacy continued to be active, until England succeeded in 'insulating' all the Indian powers within the 'ring-fence' of 'subordinate isolation'. It was only when Napoleon was finally defeated and sent to

St. Helena that England began to breathe more freely in India. Nevertheless, as Lyall stated: "No sooner, in fact, had the spectre of French troopships hovering about our sea-coast been finally laid under the waters of Trafalgar, than the apparition of European armies marching from the Caspian to the Oxus began to trouble the prophetic imagination of English statesmen. . . . From that time forward our whole policy and all our strategic dispositions upon the north-west frontier have been directed toward anticipating or counteracting the movements or supposed intentions of Russia". The Anglo-Afghan wars and the "chronic disquietude" of the British Government in India were the outcome of this situation.

The British were on tenterhooks when Napoleon courted Russian friendship for a time. There was a temporary freedom from fear when Russia joined England in the overthrow of Napoleon. Thereafter Persia and Afghanistan became the battle grounds of Anglo-Russian diplomacy: the balance of power largely rested with Russia in Persia and with England in Afghanistan. The 'Eastern Question' focussed round Turkey was the central pivot of this contest. If Russia should dominate the Muslim countries (Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan, etc.) she would inevitably endanger British interests in India and the passage to India through the "Near East". When the Suez Canal became a vital link in the "life-line" of the British approach to India, Disraeli managed to secure the lion's share in its control (1875). When it was realised that in backing Turkey, England had "put her money on the wrong horse", British policy decided on "riding" the Egyptian sphinx instead. As Mr. M. Bruce remarked: "A British victory in the Mediterranean, had, therefore, protected India, and from the battle of Aboukir (Nelson's victory over Napoleon in the 'battle of the Nile', August 1798) until the present day the security of the Eastern Mediterranean has been one of Britain's major interests". The naval defence of India being quite secure in British hands, the problem reduced itself to the safety of the land-approaches to our frontiers. Here the problem largely touched the battle-ground between England and Russia, as stated above. In Lord Curzon's picturesque language:

India is like a fortress with the vast moat of the sea on two of her faces, and with mountains for her walls on the remainder. But beyond those walls, which are sometimes of by no means insuperable height and admit of being easily penetrable, extends a glacis of varying breadth and dimensions. We do not want to occupy it, but we also cannot afford to see it occupied by our foes.

We are quite content to let it remain in the hands of our allies and friends; but if rival and unfriendly influences creep up to it, and lodge themselves right under our walls, we are compelled to intervene because a danger would thereby grow up that might one day menace our security. This is the secret of the whole position in Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, and as far eastward as Siam.

England appeared to have more fully awakened to these realities during what is known as the 'Palmerstonian era' (1827-78). Its aim was the safety of Britain and of British trade and communications. Palmerstone's methods of obtaining these objectives earned for him the significant nickname of 'Pumice stone', as his successor Disraeli came to be called 'Dizzy', because his suspicions of Russia led Britain to the 'Dizzy' brink of war. The "chronic disquietude" created by these, at least twice, flared up into major conflagrations: the two Afghan Wars (1838-42, under Auckland and Ellenborough; and 1878-80 under Lytton). Our concern in these is confined to their bearing on the problem of our frontier defence; otherwise they were part of the Imperial foreign policy of Britain rather than a real part of our national history. Of course Indian blood and revenues were expended in these adventures, which is not a negligible aspect of these affairs.

The first Afghan war was occasioned by the Persian threat (backed up by Russia) on Herat. England felt that that might bring Afghanistan within the Russian sphere of influence and ultimately endanger the British north-western frontier. This was as a matter of fact too far fetched. Herat was a thousand miles away from the British Indian border: in between there were the Punjab and Afghanistan. Ranjit Singh was still alive and powerful. He had occupied the frontier strongholds of Attock, Peshawar and Jamrud, and would not surrender them to any power. The Afghans were as sensitive to foreign encroachment as any freedom-loving people might be expected to be. Yet they were afraid of their neighbours: the Persians in the West and the Sikhs in the East. They were, however, more anxious to recover Peshawar from the latter than to hold Herat against the former. While Russia was trying to make a 'cat's paw' of Persia, England was desirous of doing the same with the Sikhs; and both were seeking to foist a 'protectorate' upon Afghanistan. If the British could prevail upon Ranjit Singh to give up Peshawar to the Afghans, the latter would most certainly have welcomed the friendship of the British. But Ranjit Singh was adamant. Still the British persisted in their courtship of Afghanistan. Diplomatic missions were sent to Kabul as well as Teheran, to counteract Russian

'designs'. Far from making for peace, these had the opposite result. The reason for this was that the British were really in search of a 'scientific frontier' for themselves, rather than genuinely interested in developing good neighbourly relations with either Ranjit Singh or the Amir of Afghanistan. The internal quarrels of the Afghans gave the British the opportunities they wanted. As early as 18th March 1799, Dundas, President of the Board of Control, had "proposed to encourage and foment "distractions and animosities" in his own territory to keep Zaman Shah employed". (C.H.I.)

The internal pacification of Afghanistan was brought about for some time by the Barakzai chief Dost Muhammad, in 1818. Zaman Shah's successor, Shah Shuja (Durrani), fled to Ranjit Singh, in the first instance, but ultimately to the British, as a fugitive. Since Dost Muhammad proved to be a strong and clever man, both Ranjit Singh and the English considered it desirable to back up the exile Shah Shuja and reinstate him in Kabul. If they succeeded, Ranjit would no longer be worried about Peshawar which the ambitious Dost Muhammad was bent upon recovering, whereas the fugitive Shah Shuja was willing to perpetually cede it to the Sikhs in return for their assistance. The English, too, as allies or King-Makers, would secure their coveted 'protectorate' over Afghanistan as a bulwark against Russia. A preliminary mission to Kabul, under Capt. Alexander Burnes, having failed to convert the politics of Dost Muhammad or to prevent him from dallying with the Russian envoy Vicovitch (who had arrived in Kabul within two months of Burnes' being there), war was decided upon by Lord Auckland, 'primed' by Palmerstone, in 1838. The "dismal story" involving the "rape of Sind" (described elsewhere) need not be recounted here.

Kabul was triumphantly occupied. Dost Muhammad was taken prisoner. Shah Shuja was installed on his throne. But the Afghans would not tolerate for long a puppet of their enemies. Shah Shuja was consequently murdered, and his English supporters were massacred wholesale. On 13th January 1842, Dr. Brydon, the sole survivor of the holocaust—as stated before—"sorely wounded and barely able to sit upon the emaciated beast that bore him", reached Jallalabad to convey the news of the tragedy of the annihilation of 4,000 British troops with their 12,000 followers. This resulted in the recall of Lord Auckland, and his replacement by Lord Ellenborough, who was not less aggressive. Generals Nott and Pollock retrieved the British military prestige, though not their hold upon Afghanistan, by 15th September, bringing back with them the faked "gates of Somnath" to feed the pompous vanity of the new

Governor-General. Dost Muhammad was unconditionally restored to Kabul.

The commentary of V. A. Smith on this catastrophic misadventure tersely sums up the criticism of this Palmerstonian policy. "The exaggerated fears of the diplomatists", he writes, "invested Herat with a fictitious importance wholly incommensurate with the strength of the place and its position in regard to Candahar and the Indus. Or, to express the facts in the simplest language, it did not matter to India whether Persia held Herat or not. But Lord Auckland had not the sense to see that truth, and was led away by ill-chosen and unwise advisers to break treaties only six years old (the country of the Amirs of Sind had to be traversed and was used as the base of operations); to bully the weak; to pursue a fantastic policy; to persist in that policy when the reasons for it, such as they were, had ceased to exist; to violate the principles of strategy; to throw away thousands of lives by entrusting them to incapable commanders; and, finally, at last to acquiesce silently in the garbling of the documents submitted for the information of Parliament. . . The crime of the first Afghan War was covered over by the ministry as far as possible, and has not always met with the stern reprobation from the historians of England which its enormity deserves." (O.H.I.)

There was a pretty long lull before the storm once again burst in the form of the second Afghan War (1878-80). This was partly due to the restored internal strong rule of Dost Muhammad, on the one hand, and his genuine loyalty (like that of Ranjit Singh) to his engagements with the British, on the other. Dost Muhammad died in 1863, giving rise to succession disputes among his sixteen sons. Partly, the policy of 'masterly inactivity' followed by Sir John Lawrence, Governor-General (1864-9), Mayo (1869-72) and Northbrook (1872-6), also contributed to the prolongation of the truce between the Afghans and the English Government of India. Lawrence very rightly thought that the difficulties between Russia and England could be better solved by direct contacts between London and St. Petersburg rather than between Calcutta and Kabul. He was content with recognising the *de facto* ruler of Kabul whoever he was, and advising that Russia should be warned "in firm and courteous language that it cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan or in those of any State which lies contiguous with our frontier". In spite of this, however, Russia steadily pressed on towards the frontier of Afghanistan, and captured Tashkent, Samarkand, and Khiva. Sher Ali, Amir of Afghanistan, was alarmed and courted the active support of the Indian Gov-

ernment against his enemies, pleading that the interests of the two governments were identical and that "the frontier of Afghanistan is in truth the frontier of India". But the India Office did not share his alarm, and tried to cajole him by gifts of money (£60,000) and rifles (as many as 25,000), without committing itself to any offensive or even defensive alliance. Yet when the non-interventionist ministry of Gladstone was replaced in England by that of the Imperialistic ministry of Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield), in 1874, the "forward" policy of Palmerstone was resumed once again. Lord Lytton, the new Governor-General acted the role of Auckland, with similar consequences. "In the late seventies," observes Sir John Marriott, "the experience of the preceding generation was almost precisely reproduced, with Lord Beaconsfield substituted for Lord Palmerstone, Lord Lytton for Lord Auckland, with the ill-fated Cavagnari in Macnaghton's part as victim, and Sir Frederick (afterwards Earl) Roberts as the *deus ex machina*—the brilliant soldier employed to redeem the errors of the politicians."

The British agreed to assist Sher Ali against his enemies, only if he should admit a British Resident at Herat. He argued that if he did that, he could not refuse the Russians a like privilege. His refusal was interpreted as arising out of hostile intentions. Diplomatic efforts having failed, "violent overtures" were attempted to force a British Resident on Afghanistan. Quetta was occupied by an agreement with the Khan of Kalat, in December 1876. It gave the British command of the Bolan Pass. Already by the annexation of the Punjab they controlled the Khybar Pass. Frightened by these movements, Sher Ali felt compelled to encourage a Russian mission to come to Kabul. The British demanded that a British Resident be now admitted. Without waiting for an invitation, Sir Neville Chamberlain was dispatched with an armed escort of 1,000 men. They were not allowed to proceed beyond the Khybar. Chamberlain wrote to the Governor-General: "Nothing could have been more humiliating to the dignity of the British Crown and nation". After going through the formality of an ultimatum (which hardly left time for the exasperated Amir to reply), war was precipitately launched rather than declared by Lord Lytton.

On 21st November 1878, three British columns entered Afghanistan through the Bolan Pass, the Khybar Pass, and the Kurram Valley. Sher Ali, failing to get Russian assistance fled to Turkistan where he died in February 1879. A treaty was signed at Gandamak, on 26th May, by Sher Ali's eldest son Yakub Khan. Sir Louis Cavagnari was stationed at Kabul with an escort. But history repeated itself with

all its tragic consequences. The warlike Afghans would not put up with a British puppet. Cavagnari and his comrades were murdered. Yakub abdicated and was deported to India. . . The British contemplated the division of Afghanistan into three separate provinces—Herat, Kabul and Kandahar—in order to keep Afghanistan permanently weak. . . But the gallant Afghans were violently opposed to any partition. . . Ultimately (after gallant fighting under Generals Stewart and Roberts) the British succeeded in establishing another Amir of their own, on 22nd July 1880. This was Abdur Rahman, a grandson of Dost Muhammad who had been in exile since 1870. He was described by Lord Lytton as “a ram caught in the thicket”. There was still some fighting to be done. . . But on 1st September, 1880, General Roberts confirmed and consummated the work of the British mission by his brilliant victory over the Afghans near Kandahar. That closed the second Afghan War. Abdur Rahman proved to be a very capable ruler. His accession secured for the British “a friendly, strong, and independent Afghanistan”. Kandahar was given up, but Quetta was retained. Likewise, the Kurram Valley, though surrendered to the Afghans in 1880, was reoccupied in 1892. Nevertheless Lord Lytton had failed in his “fancy prospect . . . of bequeathing to India the supremacy of Central Asia and the revenues of a first class power”. As Beaconsfield stated in his last public speech: “The key of India is not Merv or Herat or Kandahar. The key of India is London”. So far as Afghanistan was concerned, Abdur Rahman confessed in a picturesque simile: “My country is like a poor goat on whom the lion and the bear have both fixed their eyes, and without the protection of the Almighty Deliverer the victim cannot escape very long”.

In 1895, the Russians seized the Pamirs which brought them close to the British North-Western Frontier Province; but an Anglo-Russian Convention staved off conflict by the marking of their respective boundaries by pillars. Still troubles arose in Tibet, when a Russian agent was received at Lhasa. As Sir Edward Grey remarked: “When the interests of two Powers are constantly touching and rubbing against one another, it is hard to find a halfway house between constant liability to friction and cordial friendship”. An expedition was sent by Lord Curzon to Lhasa in 1903-4. “So far as I can judge,” writes V. A. Smith, “the expedition was unnecessary and all but fruitless.” Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was recognised. After long negotiations, a treaty was signed between London and St. Petersburg, on 31st August, 1907, which settled all the outstanding differences between Russia and Britain regarding Tibet,

Afghanistan, and Persia. "Both parties agreed to respect the integrity of Tibet, to abstain from all interference in the internal affairs of Tibet; not to send representatives to Lhasa; and to deal with Tibet only through its suzerain, the Chinese Government". The Russians recognised Afghanistan "as outside the sphere of Russian influence; that all political relations should be conducted through Great Britain; and undertook not to send any agents into Afghanistan". Finally, there was to be complete equality of commercial opportunity in Afghanistan for both countries. Similar understanding was arrived at also about Persia, with a slight advantage for Russia to balance the English position in Afghanistan.

On our eastern side, England waged three wars against Burma. The first of these was in 1824-6 under Lord Amherst. The Burmese had conquered Arakan in 1784. Sir John Shore sent a mission to the Burmese king in 1795, but nothing came of it. Further missions were sent again in 1802 and 1811-12, with no better experience. In 1813 the Burmans occupied Manipur, and Assam in 1821-2. They made incursions into Kachar in 1824 and clashed with the English Company's troops. The Burmese commander Maha Bandula was commissioned to expel the English from Bengal. But the latter met the threat by a counter-attack against Rangoon. The war ended with the Treaty of Yandaboo (February 1826) which exacted from the Burmese King an indemnity of a *crore* of rupees, besides the cession of Assam, Arakan, and the coast of Tenasserim including portions of Martaban east of the Salween river. A British Resident was also admitted at Rangoon. The Burmese fought bravely, and the expedition to Rangoon "caused much needless waste of life and treasure... Notwithstanding the valour of the soldiers, the Rangoon expedition probably would have been a failure but for the help sent by Sir Thomas Munro, the competent Governor of Madras." (V. A. Smith)

The second Burmese War was fought under Lord Dalhousie, in 1852, as a result of the ill-treatment of the English merchants in Burma. The commodore who was sent to Burma to obtain satisfaction acted like the more famous American Commodore Perry in Japan. The Burmans returned fire for fire. The Great Pagoda of Rangoon was stormed on 14th April 1852, and Prome was occupied in October. By November the whole of Pegu came into British hands. The King having refused to sign a formal treaty, Pegu was declared a British province. Dalhousie refused to move farther to Ava, but, avoiding the errors of Amherst, managed the expedition more efficiently and

organised the conquered province just as he had done the Punjab. The Government of India thereby acquired the whole of the Burmese coastline from Chittagong in the North to Singapore in the South. The Burmese were hemmed in in the interior, but they could not be so contained. Hence a third Burmese War, in 1885.

Early in 1885, Governor-General Lord Dufferin discovered that King Theebaw of Burma had concluded a treaty with the French giving them certain concessions in his country. At the same time he imposed a heavy fine upon the English 'Bombay and Burma Trading Company' and ordered the arrest of its servants in Burma. Peaceful negotiations having failed, the Indian army crossed the frontier on 14th November 1885, and on the 27th, Mandalay (then the capital of Theebaw) was occupied. The war which hardly lasted a fortnight closed with the submission of King Theebaw and his family. Theebaw was deposed and confined at Ratnagiri (Bombay State) as a political detenu. "The Viceroy's action," writes V. A. Smith, "seems to have been determined chiefly as a matter of high politics in order to exclude the threatened French interference from the side of Siam. The grievances of the Trading Company, although real and serious, evidently occupied a secondary place in his thoughts... The easy conquest of Upper Burma completed the tale of annexations on a considerable scale open to a Governor-General of India. Nothing more remained to be taken".

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GROWTH OF ADMINISTRATION

1. *De-commercialisation of the Company.* 2. *British Benevolence.* 3. *Chastened Autocracy.*

1. *De-commercialisation of the Company*

THE English East India Company was created, at the close of the sixteenth century, for purposes of trade; it continued to function as a purely commercial corporation for well nigh a century and a half. For the first time in 1748, owing to the unsettled conditions in South India, the Company undertook "on a considerable scale the functions of government and war". During the next one hundred and ten years (1748-1858), which were momentous in the making of modern India, the Company underwent a rapid transformation and was totally abolished in 1858 by an Act of Parliament "for the better government of India".

Though the rise of the British Power in India thus commenced in trade, and also culminated in the end in greater trade, Seeley categorically asserts, it "was not really planned by tradesmen or for purposes of trade". In support of this view he points out that "there has been no correspondence in time between the increase of trade and the advance of conquest." "Our trade on the contrary," he contends, "continued to be insignificant in spite of all our conquests until about 1813, and it began to advance with greater rapidity soon after 1830." These dates, according to him, "point to the true cause of progress in trade, and they show that it is wholly independent of progress in conquest, for they are the dates of the successive Acts of Parliament by which the Company was deprived of its monopoly". "Thus it appears," he concludes, "that, while it was by the East India Company that India was conquered, it was not by the East India Company, but rather by the destruction of the East India Company, that the great trade with India was brought into existence. Our conquests in India were made by an exclusive chartered Company, but our Indian trade did not greatly prosper until that Company ceased practically to exist".

True as these observations may appear, they need a little further elucidation. The implied dichotomy between trade and conquests is not wholly correct. The two streams flowed in closely parallel channels often getting mixed. The relative 'insignificance' of the trade until about 1813

was partly due to the conflict between private and national interests, and partly the inevitable outcome of the enormous burdens of wars. It is not to be forgotten that till 1815 England was engrossed in the deadly struggle with Napoleon Bonaparte. At the same time the adventurous policy of Wellesley had entailed immediate financial losses to the Company that were not wiped out even by the reversal of the 'forward' policy under Wellesley's immediate successors. "No administration," observe Thompson and Garratt, "was ever so incubus-ridden as the Company's, with black financial care seated behind the horseman, while on every wind that blew from England the clamorous voices of Directors and share-holders cried out for dividends." The Company had to contend with two unruly factors: (i) the private sharks, of which 'Palmer & Co.' in Hyderabad were the most notorious, that sucked the wealth of India with no gain to the East India Company; and (ii) warlike Governors-General, like Wellesley and Auckland, who recklessly pursued their ambitions, looking down upon the Company's Directors as a "pack of narrow-minded old women" as Wellesley called them. Since the Regulating Act, and more particularly since the setting up of the Board of Control by Pitt's India Act of 1784, Indian affairs were governed more by the political parties in power than by the wishes of the Company's Proprietors. The President of the Board of Control virtually directed the Directors, and hence also the policies in India. As Henry Tucker, Chairman of the Court of Directors, expressed it in 1838, "I feel most painfully that we are gradually sinking. Our weight and influence have declined of late, and are declining."

In the face of the above it is not quite correct historically to declare that the conquest of India was the work of the East India Company. "The immediate consequence of bringing India under direct Parliamentary control," Lyall stated more truly, "was to stimulate, not to slacken, the expansion of our territories... The foundations of our Indian Empire were marked out in haphazard piecework fashion by merchants... but the superstructure has been entirely raised by a distinguished line of Parliamentary proconsuls and generals." But when the backbone of the Company was removed by the abolition of its trade monopoly in 1833, its commercial interests were replaced by political interests. Hence the 'non-interventionist' attitude gave place to one of territorial acquisitions, disallowing 'adoptions' as a rule, and paving the way for the doctrine of annexation by 'lapse'. The Government of India was thereafter "to persevere in the one clear and direct course

of abandoning no just and honourable accession of territory or revenue". Obviously, ownership of the soil in which was rooted the 'pagoda tree' was better than merely shaking it. The increasing prosperity of commerce after 1813, and especially since 1833, referred to by Seeley, was not entirely due to the Parliamentary enactments reducing or abolishing the monopoly of the East India Company; it was more the outcome of the major portion of India having been already conquered and consolidated, as well as the world supremacy that Britain had by then virtually attained.

"The position of a private body of traders becoming rulers of vast territories—in fact vaster than those directly under the British Crown in the British Isles—was in itself so anomalous that it could not be long tolerated. The progressive subordination of the Company and its ultimate liquidation, therefore, was only a question of time. Whether the Company made enormous profits or suffered losses, it was equally on the bed of Procrustes: in the former case it was compelled to make annual contributions to the British Treasury; in the latter case it was obliged to submit to increasing Parliamentary control before loans were sanctioned for its financial relief. 1773, 1784, 1793, 1813, 1833, 1853, and 1858, were years that registered for the Company its 'funeral marches to the grave'. They comprised several Acts of Parliament bearing (1) on the constitution, powers and functions of the East India Company at home; and (2) affecting the administrative arrangements in India. We shall deal only with the first here; the second will come in for review in the next section.

Apart from the well-known Regulating Act of 1773, Lord North was responsible for another enactment in the same year by which "the Company was restricted from declaring any dividend above 6% till the new loan had been discharged, and above 7% until the bond debt was reduced to £1,500,000. It was obliged to submit its accounts every half-year to the Treasury, it was restricted from accepting bills drawn by its servants in India for above £300,000 a year, and it was required to export to the British settlements within its limits British goods of a specified value". Ten years later, Fox introduced in Parliament another Bill for "increasing the control of the State over the Company at home and its officers abroad... The chief ground of attack on Fox's Bill was its wholesale transfer of patronage from the Company to nominees of the Crown". Its only result was that it drove both Fox and North out of office; and it paved the way for Pitt's more famous enactment of 1784 by which a Board of Control was set up. Like Fox's India Bill, it was based on the principle of placing the

Company "in direct and permanent subordination to a body representing the British Government". As Lyall remarked, "the essential question before the Commons and the country was not so much whether the Company and their officers were guilty of crimes... as whether the patronage of India should be the prize of politicians, who after furiously denouncing each other's measures and principles had made a very dishonourable coalition to obtain office." The double government (of the Company and the ministerial Board) established by Pitt's Act of 1784, "with its cumbrous and dilatory procedure and its elaborate checks and counter-checks, though modified in details, remained substantially in force until 1858." (Ilbert).

An Act of 1788 provided for the sending out to India four royal regiments, despite the opposition of the Company's Directors, to be paid for out of the revenues of India. It also required the Directors to lay annually before Parliament an account of the Company's receipts and disbursements. The Act of 1793 was merely a measure of consolidation introducing no major changes. It is important, however, for us to note that it provided for the payment of the members and staff of the Board of Control out of Indian revenues. By an Act of 1799 the Crown took the enlistment of men for serving in India into its own hands. "All the men raised were liable to the Mutiny Act until embarked for India."

The Charter Act of 1813 was a more important measure. It was the outcome of a critical and searching review of the entire position in India, in the wake of Wellesley's conquests. The main question was that of continuing the Company's trade monopoly. In 1811, Lord Melville had told the Directors that His Majesty's ministers could not recommend to Parliament the continuance of the existing system unless they were prepared to admit private merchants into the Indian trade "under such restrictions as might be deemed reasonable". The Directors argued that their political authority and commercial privileges were inseparable, that their trade profits depended upon their monopoly, and that if their trade profits were taken away their revenues would not enable them to carry on the government of the country. As a compromise, the Act of 1813 allowed the Company to retain its monopoly of the tea trade and the trade with China; but threw open the general Indian trade to other Englishmen subject to certain restrictions. It also laid down that the Company should keep their trade and revenue accounts separate. The preamble significantly spoke of "the expediency of continuing to the Company for a further term the possession

of the territorial acquisitions in India, and the revenues thereof, without prejudice to the undoubted 'sovereignty of the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in and over the same'. This important proviso was further strengthened by the Charter Act of 1833. The term during which the Company was allowed to retain its territorial possessions was extended to another twenty years; but they were to be held "in trust for His Majesty, his heirs and successors, for the service of the Government of India." The remaining monopolies of the Company, those regarding the tea and China trades, were finally abolished. "The Company, while deprived of its commercial functions, retained its administrative and political powers, under the system of double government instituted by previous Acts, and, in particular, continued to exercise its rights of patronage over Indian appointments." (Ilbert).

In 1853 there was a renewal of the Company's privilege of conducting the Government of India 'in trust for the Crown', but only "until Parliament should otherwise direct". Further, six out of the eighteen Directors of the Company were now to be appointed by the Crown. Lastly, the right of patronage to Indian appointments was taken away from the Company. The new regulations for such appointments, framed by the Board of Control, threw the covenanted civil service open to general competition.

The final closing down of the Company's hold over India came about more suddenly than was expected. It was the direct result of the Great Rising of 1857. The Act of 1858 "for the better government of India" transferred all the properties of the Company to the British Crown, the Board of Control was replaced by a Secretary of State for India assisted by a Council of fifteen members (8 appointed by the Crown and 7 elected by the Directors of the Company, in the first instance), and officers on the Home establishment of the Company and the Board of Control constituted the India Office establishment. "The expenditure of the revenues of India was to be under the control of the Secretary of State in Council, but was to be charged with a dividend on the Company's stock and with their debts, and the Indian revenues remitted to Great Britain were to be paid to the Secretary of State in Council and applied for Indian purposes." The Civil Service was to be constituted by "natural-born subjects of Her Majesty" selected by competitive examination under rules to be made by the Secretary of State in Council with the assistance of the Civil Service Commissioners. All the naval and military forces of the Company were transferred to the Crown.

In a petition to Parliament (February 1858) the East India Company proudly recounted its services to England as well as India, from which the following excerpts may be made to commemorate its great work:

During the period of about a century which has since elapsed (after losing 'another great empire on the opposite side of the Atlantic'), the Indian possessions of this country have been governed and defended from the resources of those possessions without the smallest cost to the British Exchequer, which, to the best of your petitioners' knowledge and belief, cannot be said of any other of the numerous foreign dependencies of the Crown...

They (the petitioners) claim their full share of the responsibility of the manner in which India has practically been governed. That responsibility is to them not a subject of humiliation but of pride... they feel complete assurance that, the more attention is bestowed and the more light thrown upon India and its administration, the more evident it will become that the government in which they have borne a part has been not only one of the purest in intention, but one of the most beneficent in act, ever known among mankind; and that, during the last and present generation in particular, it has been, in all departments, one of the most rapidly improving governments in the world; and that, at the time when this change is proposed, a greater number of important improvements are in a state of rapid progress than at any former period. And they are satisfied that whatever further improvements may be hereafter effected in India can only consist in the development of germs already planted, and in building on foundations already laid, under their authority, and in a great measure by their express instructions.

2. *British Benevolence*

Commerce and politics are not always congenial to the display or development of moral virtues. The combination of the two in the East India Company put in the hands of Englishmen a degree of power that might have been used for the exclusive benefit of England and the permanent loss of India. It must, however, be acknowledged with gratitude that the establishment of British supremacy in India, while it undoubtedly benefited England, did more good than harm to this country. It cannot be gainsaid even by Englishmen that considerable harm was done to India, especially by the earlier builders of their Empire. The crimes of Clive and Warren Hastings may be forgiven but

not forgotten by the Indian historian. Even Wellesley, Lord Hastings and Dalhousie, in their Imperialistic activities, were inspired more by political considerations than by a strict regard for equity and justice to Indians. The circumstances that led to the resignation of Lord Hastings, viz., his virtual connivance of the criminal exploitation or blackmailing by 'Palmer & Co.' in which his "adopted son-in-law" had interests, illustrated the danger to which India was exposed in the possibility of such *liaison* between the highest officials of the Company and the army of parasites (described by Wellesley as the "English locusts") that bled India white. Those economic leeches (in Bengal, in the Carnatic, in Hyderabad, and in Oudh), however, did equal harm to the finances of the Company and the reputation of England. Hence the hesitancy of Parliament, on the eve of the passing of the Charter Act of 1813, to freely permit private English adventurers to settle in India. On that memorable occasion 'the venerable Warren Hastings', Lord Teignmouth (Sir J. Shore), Colonel (Sir John) Malcolm, and Colonel (Sir Thomas) Munro gave evidence that argued for caution. Experience had proved, they affirmed, that "it was difficult to impress, even upon the servants of the Company, whilst in their noviciate, a due regard for the feelings and habits of the people; and Englishmen of classes less under the observation of the supreme authorities were notorious for the contempt with which, in their natural arrogance and ignorance, they contemplated the usages and institutions of the natives, and for their frequent disregard of the dictates of humanity and justice in their dealings with the people of India". (Ilbert). Warren Hastings, Cornwallis, and Wellesley had done their best to harness these evil forces, in their individual discretion and authority; but the Thirteenth Resolution of 1813, adopted by the British Parliament, bore testimony to the good faith of the entire nation towards India. It declared that "it is the duty of this country to promote the interest and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India, and that such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction amongst them of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral improvement; that in the furtherance of the above objects, sufficient facilities shall be afforded by law to persons desirous of going to and remaining in India for the purpose of accomplishing these benevolent designs, provided always, that the authority of the local Governments, respecting the intercourse of Europeans with the interior of the country, be preserved, and that the principles of the British Government, on which the natives

of India have hitherto relied for the free exercise of their religion, be inviolably maintained."

The good intentions so expressed in 1813 were reiterated and extended in the next Charter Act of 1833, which tried to break up the undesirable combination of trade with political power, by requiring the Company to close down its commercial business as soon as may be, so that it might concentrate wholly on the work of administration. For greater efficiency, the overgrown Presidency of Bengal was proposed to be divided into two: the Presidency of Fort William and the Presidency of Agra (though this was not immediately given effect to). At the same time, to achieve greater unity and cohesion, all legislative power of the Government of India was vested in the Governor-General (who was now styled Governor-General of India" instead of "Governor-General of Fort William and Bengal" as heretofore) in Council. The legal system of the Government of India was sought to be completely reorganised by the appointment of the first 'Indian Law Commission', and, as a result of its prolonged deliberations, the Indian Penal Code and the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure eventually came into being. As Mr. Cowell pointed out, until then there was chaotic confusion as to the nature of laws and regulations, the sources of their origin, and the conflicting judicatures by which they were administered. Section 53 of the Act stated that it was "expedient that, subject to such special arrangements as local circumstances may require, a general system of judicial establishments and police, *to which all persons whatsoever, as well Europeans as natives, may be subject*, should be established in the said territories at an early period; and that such laws as may be applicable in common to all classes of the inhabitants of the said territories, *due regard being had to the rights, feelings, and peculiar usages of the people*, should be enacted; and that all laws and customs having the force of law within the same territories should be ascertained and consolidated, and, as occasion may require, amended". The judicial murder of Nand Kumar for alleged forgery in the time of Warren Hastings was an instance of the tragic results of the misapplication of the requirements of English law to offences in India and by Indians; apart from the shady reflections, in that specific case, on the personal factors of Warren Hastings' and Judge Impey's roles in the summary execution of the Indian for an offence committed with impunity by Lord Clive—the first founder of the British Empire.

Relaxation or removal of the previously laid down regulations regarding the entry and settlement of Euro-

peans in India was permitted under the Act of 1833, only on condition that provision was made against "any mischief or dangers that may arise therefrom". It required the Governor-General in Council, by laws and regulations, to provide, with all convenient speed, for the "*protection of the natives of the said territories from insult and outrage in their persons, religions and opinions*". The Governor-General in Council were also required forthwith to take steps "to mitigate the state of slavery, and of ameliorating the condition of slaves, and of extinguishing slavery throughout the Indian territories so soon as such extinction should be practicable and safe...with due regard to be had for the laws of marriages and the rights and authorities of fathers and heads of families". Finally, section 87 of the Act, emphatically declared that "*no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from any place, office, or employment under the Company.*"

On the eve of the dissolution of the Company's government in India, the Directors observed: "Your petitioners cannot contemplate without dismay the doctrine now widely promulgated that India should be administered with an especial view to the benefit of the English who reside there...Your petitioners regard it as the most honourable characteristic of the government of India by England, that it has acknowledged no such distinction as that of a dominant and subject race, but has held that its first duty was to the people of India." With a statesman-like anticipation of this sagacious political principle, Bentinck, even before he was made Governor-General, had stated: "Happily a period has arrived (when) for the first time the blessings of universal tranquillity may be expected. That system of policy, which could embrace the whole of India, which could comprehend in one bond of mutual defence and reciprocal forbearance...That system which has founded British greatness upon Indian happiness demands in a particular manner the thanks and applause of this country." After the suppression of the Great Rising of 1857 Queen Victoria proclaimed:

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessings of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil...We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith

or observances but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law;... And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to office in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge. . . . and we will that, generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India. . . . When, by the blessings of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of utility and improvements, and to administer the government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.

Without questioning the honesty of the intentions expressed in the foregoing promises, it may be legitimately pointed out that there is always a gap between the theory and practice of governments. While the theory tends to be idealistic, the practice often lingers behind struggling with realities not comprehended or suggested by the language of proclamations. This is true even when the government is a national one. The gap inevitably becomes wider where foreign and remotely situated authorities have to rule over distant dependencies, like Britain over India. Rulers will always stress the idealistic aspects, but subjects cannot be blamed for their insistence of the realities. The autocratic Catherine II of Russia proclaimed that 'governments exist for their subjects and not subjects for their governments'. Likewise the paternalistic yet not less autocratic Frederick II of Prussia professed that he was the 'first servant of the State'. The British Government of India, particularly during the nineteenth century, was paternalistic as well as autocratic in the constitutional sense of the term. This was emphatically and more so before the transfer to the Crown in 1858. Reserving the Crown period for later comment, we shall here rapidly review the Company period under the Governors-General, from Warren Hastings to Dalhousie (1786-1856).

Warren Hastings worked under several heavy handicaps. The Regulating Act which was the basis of the new set up revealed imperfections in the course of its working that could be corrected only gradually. The three main defects of the system or lack of system were that (i) the

Supreme Court which was intended to curb some of the glaring abuses of the old order was powerless over the Governor-General and his Council; and the laws it was to administer and its jurisdiction, *vis-a-vis* the other courts like the Fauzdari and Diwani Adalat, were also not clearly defined. (ii) The Governor-General was powerless over his own Council of four (three of whom generally formed a combination against him) whose majority decisions he was bound to accept. Warren Hastings was constantly at logger-heads with one of his councillors, Francis, who became his personal enemy and fought a duel with him. (iii) The Government of Bengal was powerless over the Governments of Madras and Bombay, though the latter were nominally subordinate to the former in matters of war and peace. The last was responsible for the iniquity of the Anglo-Mysore and Anglo-Maratha wars; the second for the grave miscarriage of justice, particularly where Indians were concerned (to wit: Nand Kumar's case); and the first for the entire inefficiency and corruption of the Company's administration. As Sir John Malcolm stated with truth, Warren Hastings' "most strenuous advocates... while they defend his personal integrity, are forced to acknowledge, that the whole system of the government over which he presided was corrupt and full of abuses". This was the legacy that Lord Cornwallis was called upon to improve. In that task he had, apart from his personal antecedents which made him more independent, two initial advantages, *viz.* the redefinition of the jurisdiction and laws to be administered by the Supreme Court, according to the Amending Act of 1781; and the greater powers given to the Governor-General over his Council and the subordinate Presidencies, by the Act of 1784. Of particular importance to Indians was the stipulation that Hindus and Muhammadans were to be governed by their respective laws and traditions, "although it might not be held justifiable by the laws of England". Technically, "therefore, Cornwallis had all the advantages for a real effort towards all-round reforms. Indeed, he made the best use of his opportunities, and, though he might be criticised on specific details, his work as a whole entitled him, as his biographer (W. S. Seton-Karr) has written, "to rank as one of those English statesmen who have based our supremacy in India on a solid foundation, and have civilised, disciplined, and improved vast provinces acquired either by conquest or cession". "He laid the foundation of the present Indian constitution," writes another.

Cornwallis' reforms touched almost every field, civil and military. We can only give a few outstanding illustra-

tions. His achievement, in order of importance, according to P. E. Roberts, "are the reform of the covenanted service, the permanent settlement of the land revenues of Bengal, and the reorganisation of the Bengal courts of law". We shall deal with the revenue settlement last.

Nepotism and corruption were rife among the servants of the Company, high and low, before the arrival of Cornwallis; he purified the services to a considerable extent, though the evil practice of making private gains under the shadow of authority was not quite easy to exercise. The notorious case of the Residency of Benares has been cited before. The Resident, whose official salary was £ 1,350 a year, otherwise earned not less than £ 40,000 annually. "How else but by the collusion between the Directors and their servants in the East can we account for the fact?" asks P. E. Roberts very pertinently. Cornwallis himself wrote, "The Directors knew that these shocking evils existed, but instead of attempting to suppress them, were quarrelling whether their friends, or those of Mr. Hastings, should enjoy the plunder." "In other places, Collectors engaged in commercial speculation under cover of the name of some relative or friend; and it may be said roundly, that while no Collector drew above 1,200 rupees a month, his irregular and additional gains amounted to far more." By raising the official emoluments of all grades of servants, and by laying down stringent regulations for their conduct, Cornwallis brought the evil under strict control, though he could not altogether abolish it. The Collector was formally placed under the Board of Revenue with which he was regularly to correspond, and his judicial powers were taken away from him. This last salutary reform was, however, reversed by Lord Hastings later.

Parliamentary control up to this stage, instead of removing jobbery, had actually accentuated it. Here a weaker man than Cornwallis might easily have succumbed; but Cornwallis displayed an admirable independence of character. "Peers and other acquaintances including the Prince of Wales had not the slightest hesitation in writing out to Cornwallis to provide for Mr. Such-a-one in some lucrative and easy post." In a letter to his brother, the Governor-General characterised these as "infamous and unjustifiable jobs". Citing one specific instance, he wrote to Lord Sydney, "I think I told you how much Lord Ailesbury had distressed me by sending out Mr. Risto. He is now writing in the secretary's office for 200 or 250 rupees per month, and I do not see the probability of my being able to give him anything better, without deserving to be impeached. I am still persecuted every day by peo-

ple coming out with letters to me, who either get into jail or starve in the foreign Settlements. For God's sake do all in your power to stop this madness."

In the judicial sphere, apart from the very important separation of the revenue and judicial functions of the collectors, Cornwallis brought order out of the chaos that obtained before his time. He established a regular hierarchy of civil and criminal courts in the City, District, and Province, with Courts of Appeal: viz. the civil *Sadr Diwani Adalat* and the criminal *Sadr Nizamat Adalat*. An elaborate Code of Regulations, drawn up by George Barlow, was printed and published to guide the officials of the new judicial system. "The Cornwallis Code", writes Seton-Karr, "whether for revenue, police, criminal and civil justice, or other functions, defined and set bounds to authority, created procedure, by a regular system of appeal guarded against the miscarriage of justice, and founded the Civil Service of India as it exists to this day... The Cornwallis Code was dictated by an anxious desire to conciliate Hindus and Muhammadans, to soothe their feelings, to avoid offence to religious and social prejudices, and at the same time to substitute order, method, and system for anarchy, chaos, and the irregular and uncontrolled exercise of power... In addition to his revenue and judicial Code, Lord Cornwallis laid it down as a rule that the official acts of the Collectors might be challenged in the civil courts of the country; that Government might be sued, like any private individual, for exactions or infringements of the rights of landholders; and that such suits could only be cognizable by Judges who had no direct or personal interest in enforcing the financial claims of Government."

Lastly, his revenue settlement is by far the best known of Cornwallis' measures. It is known as the 'Permanent or Perpetual Settlement' of the land revenue in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. After Cornwallis left for England, in 1793, it was also extended to Benares, but not copied anywhere else in India. When it was first established in Bengal, it raised a very keen controversy, which was perhaps unparalleled except by the question of the abolition of *Sati* by Bēntinck and the Ilbert Bill agitation under Ripon. Cornwallis had two very distinct objects in view: He wished to recognise the Zamindars as landed proprietors with the prospect of an increased rental from the cultivation of the land, and he desired that the Settlement made with them for ten years should be declared permanent and fixed for ever. Commenting on this proposal, the *Calcutta Gazette*, on 9th May, 1793, pointed out: "By these

measures a permanent revenue is secured to Government, property to individuals, and a prospect of wealth and happiness is opened to the natives co-extensive with the industry and capital they shall think fit to employ in the cultivation and improvement of their lands."

The *zamindars* were the greatest gainers by this. Originally they were not the owners or proprietors of the lands, but merely rent-collectors or farmers of revenue appointed by Government. Though they tended to be hereditary in the course of time, they were liable to succession duties and other taxes. But now, by one proclamation, they were declared permanent owners with no other obligations than the regular payment of the revenue fixed for all time. Their 'unearned increments' were forever theirs. That revenue, reckoned at no more than a total of 3½ millions sterling in the time of Cornwallis, rose to 13 millions sterling in the course of years; yet the *zamindars* paid to Government no more than the original assessment of 1793. Besides, "a very great blunder as well as gross injustice was committed," said H. Beveridge, "when a settlement was made with Zamindars alone, and rights of property every whit as good as theirs (*viz.* of the *ryots* or tenants) were completely ignored."

Sir John Shore, who knew the intricacies of the land system of Bengal better than Cornwallis, thought that the Governor-General was acting in too great a hurry. "Much time, I fear," he declared, "will elapse before we can establish a system perfectly consistent in all its parts, and before we can reduce the compound relation of a Zamindar to Government, and of a Ryot to a Zamindar, to the simple principles of landlord and tenant". He proposed the compromise of a decennial assessment, as between the two extremes of the quinquennial settlement of Warren Hastings and the perpetual system of Cornwallis. But, as Seton-Karr conclusively observed, "Pressed for ways and means, and anxious for reform in more departments than one, he (Cornwallis) committed himself to a policy which, in regard to the three interested parties—the Zamindar, the Ryot, and the Ruling Power—assured the welfare of the first, somewhat postponed the claims of the second, and sacrificed the increment of the third." It was not until 1859 that the Bengal Land Act brought relief to the *ryots* who were placed under the tender mercy of the *zamindars* by the fiat of Cornwallis in 1793. The British Government was at least compensated for its loss of increments in revenue by the solid loyalty of the *zamindars*, as that of the Princes, during the crisis of the Great Rising of 1857. "It is, indeed, not easy to over-estimate the advantage of

a wealthy and privileged class, who have everything to lose and nothing to gain by revolution!"*

Before turning to the other Governors-General and other aspects of British rule, we might anticipate a little and mention summarily a few facts about the later revenue 'settlements' in other parts of India. The publication of the *Fifth Report* of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, in 1812, which dealt comprehensively with the revenue system and its problems, led to a thorough reconsideration of the policy of Cornwallis. No better commentary on the 'Permanent Settlement' is to be found than its permanent abandonment in other provinces. The proposal to make it universal was time and again mooted but finally buried in 1883. Regulation VII of 1822 and IX of 1833 fixed the revenue settlement of Agra Province, and eventually of other parts of North India (outside Bengal, Bihar and Orissa), on the basis of 'groups of zamindars forming a brotherhood or community in each village' (*Mahalwari*), instead of with the individual landowners. In Madras and Bombay the settlement was with the individual ryots (*Ryotwari*), with minor variations in the two presidencies. In Bombay the actual holdings were grouped in small "survey numbers", though the settlement was on the individual basis as in Madras. Sir Thomas Munro was not the author or originator of the Ryotwari system, as is wrongly supposed, but only its sponsor. "It is not our business," he declared, "to force it (the prevailing system of small holdings) into large masses upon any theoretical notion of convenience or improvement."

Under this system: "The registered occupant of each field deals directly with Government, and so long as he pays the assessment he is entitled to hold the land for ever and cannot be ejected by Government, though he himself may, in any year, increase or diminish his holding or entirely abandon it; should the land be required for a public purpose, it must be bought at 15 per cent. above its market value."

Settlements are now generally for twenty or thirty years. "The modern system," writes V.A. Smith, "dates only

* For a detailed examination and criticism of the 'Permanent Settlement' and its results, read V. A. Smith: *Oxford History of India* pp.561-70. (Second Edition, 1923). Briefly, Smith says, "The author of this book has no doubt that it was wrong." It entailed the enormous loss to the Government of Bengal of not less than 300 lakhs of rupees a year, "a burden which the rest of India has to bear." The famous *Fifth Report* of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, presented in 1812, gives a 'comprehensive and distressing view of the evils wrought by the permanent settlement'.

from 1855, and differs from that of Munro's time in several important particulars, notably in the ryot's absolute right to relinquish his land, and in the full protection given to private improvements. The assessments have been largely reduced, and the penalty of imprisonment for default is no longer enforced. The Madras system as now worked seems to be excellent."

Apart from the Zamindari system (now abolished), another "radical error" of Cornwallis' was his distrust, if not contempt, of the 'natives'. "It must be universally admitted," he declared, "that without a large and well-regulated body of Europeans, our hold of these valuable dominions must be very insecure. It cannot be expected that even the best of treatment would constantly conciliate the willing obedience of so vast a body of people, differing from ourselves in almost every circumstance of laws, religion, and customs...it would not be wise to place great dependence upon their countrymen who compose the native regiments to secure their subjection." He was further of the opinion that "all regulations for reform ... would be useless and nugatory, whilst the execution of them depends upon any native whatever", and therefore all the judicial proceedings should be at least supervised by Europeans. "His plan for paying liberal salaries applied only to the European service." (*Oxford History of India*.)

In spite of the sympathetic understanding of the Indians that Warren Hastings displayed in his early days, particularly when he was merely Governor of Bengal, it is largely true, as Marshman wrote, "under the impolitic system established in 1793, the prospects of legitimate and honourable ambition were altogether closed against the native of the country." It was not until the time of Lord Hastings that 'generally speaking the employment of natives of the country in positions of considerable authority was slowly extended.' Lord William Bentinck had the courage to reverse boldly the erroneous policy of Lord Cornwallis and to act decisively on the principles laid down by Sir Thomas Munro, Sir Charles Metcalfe, and Sir John Malcolm, and 'Indian officers were entrusted with responsible judicial and executive duties, decently paid'. Bentinck deserves credit for the clear vision which enabled him 'to construct for the first time a really workable, efficient framework of administration, offering to the natives of the country reasonable opportunities for the exercise of their abilities, and capable of the expansion still in progress.'

Benjamin Jowett once remarked: "England cannot govern a people without understanding it, and an understanding can only be gained through a thorough knowledge of its language, its literature, its customs, its poetry and its mythology." It was a lucky circumstance that Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General, too, possessed the vision to recognise this sound principle. We noted how, in commending Halhead's work on Hindu law (*A Code of Gentoo Law*, 1776), Hastings wrote to Lord Mansfield that he "desired to found the authority of the British government in Bengal on its ancient laws;" and that he hoped Halhead's book might "serve to point out the way to rule this people with ease and moderation according to their own ideas, manners and prejudices". Sanskrit not being understood by any Englishman then, a body of *pundits* was employed by Halhead to prepare a digest of Hindu law, which was first translated into Persian and then rendered into English. Likewise, Hastings also patronised Gladwin's English translation of the *Ain-e-Akbari* "to assist the judgment of the Court of Directors on many points of importance to the first interests to the Company". Sir William Jones translated the *Law Book of Manu* in 1794; and Colebrook produced his four volumes of *A Digest of Hindu Law on Contracts and Succession* in 1797-8. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded by Sir William Jones in 1784, and a Sanskrit College was established by Jonathan Duncan at Benares in 1792. "The Sanskrit language," declared Jones, "whatever its antiquity, is of wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either." The purpose of the Benares College was 'to preserve the laws, literature and religion of the Hindus at the centre of their faith'; thereby, it was also hoped that, it would 'prove a nursery of future doctors and expounders of Hindu Law; and would assist the European judges in the due, regular and uniform administration of its genuine letter and spirit to the body of the people.' The *Bhagavad Gita* was translated into English for the first time by Sir Charles Wilkins, and Kalidasa's famous masterpiece, *Shakuntala*, by Jones, which evoked the admiration of the German poet Goethe who declared: "Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured,
feasted, fed;
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole
name combine?
I name thee, O Sakuntala, and all at once is said."

The *Madrasah* or Muhammadan College of Calcutta was another of Warren Hastings' foundations. It was intended 'to qualify the sons of Muhammadan gentlemen for responsibility and lucrative offices of State'.

The need for training officials was not, however, confined to the Indians. Wellesley, in the midst of his wars and conquests found time to recognise the necessity and make suitable recommendations on that behalf, though his plans did not bear adequate fruit immediately. "The civil servants of the East India Company," he declared, "can no longer be considered as the agents of a commercial concern. They are, in fact, the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign; they must be viewed in that capacity, with reference not to their nominal but to their real occupations. They are required to discharge the functions of magistrates, judges, ambassadors, and governors of provinces... Their duties are those of statesmen in every other part of the world... Their education should be founded in a general knowledge of those branches of literature and science which form the basis of the education of persons destined to similar occupations in Europe. To this foundation should be added an intimate acquaintance with the history, languages, customs, and manners of the people of India, with the Mahometan and Hindoo codes of law and religion, and with the political and commercial interests of Great Britain in Asia."

The Charter Act of 1813, for the first time, allotted a sum of about £10,000 (one *lakh* of rupees), 'set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of the knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories.'

Before the heated controversy over the kind of education to be imparted to Indians arose, as we shall presently note, Lord Hastings emphatically expressed the view that, 'this Government never will be influenced by the erroneous position that to spread information among men is to render them less tractable and less submissive to authority. It would be treason to the British sentiment to imagine that it ever could be the principle of this Government to perpetuate ignorance in order to secure paltry dishonest advantages over the blindness of the multitude.'

The controversy regarding the medium of instruction and Oriental *vs.* Occidental education represented a very crucial stage in the history of the making of modern India. But we cannot go into all its details here. The Orientalists were led by H. H. Wilson and H. T. Prinsep

(Secretary, Education Department, Government of Bengal), and powerfully opposed by T. B. Macaulay (President of the Council of Education, and Law Member of the Governor-General's Council). The latter, as Prinsep noted in his diary, regarded Eastern literature and science as 'immoral, profane and nonsensical'. In spite of Macaulay's well-known but ignorant diatribe on Oriental literature and science, he did 'burst open the books of conservatism with the power of his rhetoric, and let in the flood of new ideas'. Consequently, the resolution of 7th March, 1835, (of the Governor-General's Council) declared: 'The great objective of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.' Nevertheless, the value of the vernaculars was not totally lost sight of. The report of the General Committee of Public Instruction for 1836 stated: 'We are deeply sensible of the importance of encouraging the cultivation of the vernacular languages. We do not conceive that the order of the 7th March precludes us from doing this, and we have constantly acted on this construction... We conceive the formation of a vernacular literature to be the ultimate object to which all our efforts must be directed.' We might clinch this subject with the memorable words of Macaulay which embody his noble vision, though they were uttered before Parliament in connection with the passing of the Charter Act of 1833, a little before he came out to India:

It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system until it has outgrown that system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history... The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws.

The introduction of European education was undoubtedly

the crowning achievement of Bentinck's regime (1828-35). As Marshman declared, "His administration marks the most memorable period of improvement between the days of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Dalhousie and a salient point in the history of Indian reform. With the intuition of a great mind, he discovered the weak points of our system of administration, which was becoming effete under the withering influence of routine, and the remedies he applied went to the root of the disease. He infused new blood into our institutions and started them on a new career of vigour and efficiency". The inscription on his monument, composed by Macaulay, speaks of his wise, upright and paternal administration and praises Bentinck's 'eminent prudence, integrity, and benevolence', and describes him as one 'who never forgot that the end of government is the welfare of the governed; who abolished cruel rites, who effaced humiliating distinctions; who allowed liberty to the expression of public opinion; whose constant study it was to elevate the moral and intellectual character of the Government committed to his charge'.

Among his minor reforms were the cutting down of the expenses in almost all the departments, strict, almost 'inquisitorial', vigilance of the work of all officials, and the abolition of flogging as a punishment in the native army, while the rates of pay to the sepoys 'after long service' were enhanced. The invidious retention of flogging among British troops provoked acrid comment among Europeans. Deploring this 'Odious distinction', Sleeman observed, that it subjected "the white man, the member and support of the ruling race, to a grave personal indignity from which his dark-skinned comrade was exempt". The practice was revived by Sir Henry Hardinge, but it was confined only to war time in 1868, and totally abolished in 1881.

By far the most renowned service rendered by Lord William Bentinck to India was his bold suppression of 'suttee and thuggee'. The former practice had its remote origin in antiquity, and the latter came into existence in early medieval times, both involving inhuman cruelty in the name of religion. Conservatives like H. H. Wilson feared that any attempt to meddle with these or other religious customs of the mass of the people might provoke widespread revolts. A similar apprehension had been expressed before when the first medical college was started in Calcutta; yet events showed that even Brahmans took dissection without any sense of pollution. To the nervous critics, Bentinck declared, "Prudence and self-interest would counsel me to tread in the footsteps of my predecessors (who tolerated such cruel rites). But in a case of

such momentous importance to humanity and civilization, that man must be reckless of all his present and future happiness, who could listen to the dictates of so wicked and selfish a policy. I should be guilty of little short of the crime of multiple murder, if I should hesitate in the performance of this solemn obligation."

'Suttee' or more correctly *Sati* really meant a chaste and devoted wife; the rite of burning the widow on the death of the husband was called *sahagamana* or 'accompanying' the spouse to the other world, through the funeral pyre. The number of such persons sacrificed every year, particularly in Bengal, was appalling. In 1818, for instance, no fewer than 839 cases occurred in that presidency, of which as many as 544 were accounted for by the Calcutta division alone. In 1828, the corresponding numbers on the records were 463 and 309. "The practice", writes V. A. Smith, "had been often locally prohibited both by Hindu princes and by European officers. It was forbidden in the Peshwa's personal domains and in the Tanjore Maratha principality. Early in the sixteenth century Albuquerque forbade it in Goa; and at different times individual British officers had ventured to prohibit it in their respective jurisdictions. But a general law was needed in order to effect appreciable reform." It will be recalled that Akbar had prohibited the compulsory burning of widows, though he did not interfere with voluntary self-immolations. Regulation XVII of 1829 declared 'Sati' illegal and punishable by the criminal courts as 'culpable homicide' amounting to 'manslaughter' for which a death sentence could be awarded. An appeal to the Privy Council in England made by some orthodox people against this new measure was dismissed, thanks to the staunch advocacy of the reform by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Thag or *Thak* are the more correct forms, of which 'thuggee' is an anglicised corruption, and signify a 'cheat'. During the dark ages of our history several criminal obscurantists formed themselves into gangs professing the cult of Kali or Durga and indulged in wholesale human sacrifices. They were a social pest like the Pindaris and had remained unattended to by the earlier rulers. Bentinck with the assistance of Sir William Sleeman (who acquired the nickname of 'Thuggee Sleeman') took effective measures to destroy their nests and organisation. During the years 1831-7, over three thousand of them were netted or swept away, 412 being hanged. Similar or worse horrors were perpetrated by the Khonds of the Hill Tracts of Orissa, known as the 'Meriah' sacrifices in which men were torn to pieces in order to propitiate the earth

goddess. Thanks to the efforts of Sir Henry Hardinge and Major-General John Cambell, these too were stamped out between 1847-54. Hardinge also took preliminary steps towards the creation of the Indian railway system, and the construction of canals like the Ganges Canal. But substantial progress in these directions was made only in after years.

The last and perhaps the greatest constructive genius sent out to India during the Company's regime was Lord Dalhousie. He converted, as Sir William Hunter so happily put it, "the stationary India of Wellesley into the progressive India of our own day". Briefly, "there was not a department of government, not a sphere of activity, in which he did not leave the impress of his personality. He reformed the prison system; he established cheap postage; he laid down 4,000 miles of electric telegraph; he encouraged and improved the cultivation of cotton, flax, and tea; he busied himself with the preservation and renewal of forests; he improved the breed of horses and sheep; he constructed canals, improved navigation and instituted irrigation works on a large scale; improved harbours, constructed bridges and roads, and reorganized the Public Works Department. Nor were his social reforms less significant than his material improvements." (Marriott).

One of the most important administrative changes made during Dalhousie's time, which enabled the Governor-General to devote more time to all-round improvements was the separation of his jurisdiction from that of the direct administration of Bengal for which a Lieutenant-Governor was appointed in 1853. Dalhousie constituted the newly annexed territories into 'Non-Regulation' provinces under Commissioners directly responsible to him, instead of extending the cumbrous machinery and regulations of the original three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. In the judicial and revenue system of these new provinces or divisions, the indigenous customs and usages formed the ground-work, while the superstructure 'was shaped with a considerate hand upon the models at work within British India'. The essential feature of this system, according to Hunter, was the concentration of all powers, judicial, executive, revenue and police, in the hands of the District Officer, aided by assistants under his immediate orders. By these means and others described below, Dalhousie 'literally bound together the old and the new territories by bands of iron'.

Dalhousie was the father of the Indian Railway, Telegraph and Postal systems. These vast and vital national

services were undertaken on account of their material as well as social importance. They have served to modernise India and to unify the people as much as, if not more than a common government and a common system of education. The first railway track was laid between Bombay and Thana in 1853; and before the end of 1856, thousands of miles of railway were under construction or survey. In 1892 there were 17,768 miles at work. 'Instead of making the railways a purely governmental undertaking, he offered them to public companies under a system of State-guarantee.' By 1879 they attracted to India English private capital of over 98,000,000 sterling. The entire system came to be nationalised only with the advent of freedom in 1947. Railway development was also accompanied by 'removing the previous checks and hindrances on Indian trade'. That resulted in the great expansion of our export trade from 13½ millions sterling in 1848 to over 23 millions in 1856. Of this raw cotton alone rose from 1½ to 3½ millions sterling; and grains from £ 8,90,000 to £2,900,000, during the same period. 'Not only was the export of the old staples enormously increased, but new articles of commerce poured into the markets, under the influence of improved internal communications and open ports.' English manufactures began to invade the Indian markets on an unprecedented scale, particularly textiles, which more than doubled between 1848 and 1856. Our total imports during those eight years increased from 10 1/3 to 25¼ millions sterling. Indeed, as J. L. Hammond put it, "The effect of political control, combined with the inventions (see note at the end of this chapter), was seen in the figures of our trade with India... If India had been in the hands of a rival Power anxious either to develop a new cotton industry of its own, or to develop a native cotton industry in India, Lancashire would not have found so rich a market for her yarn and piece-goods."

"The great Pro-consul was not content, however, to bind together the Empire of India by the iron lines," writes Hunter, "he also introduced two other powerful instruments of consolidation into India—the telegraph and a half-penny post." Commenting further on these "powerful instruments of consolidation", he remarks: "The railway and the telegraph were worth thousands of men to us in the Mutiny of 1857, and it is by the railway and telegraph that India is now strategically held." The telegraph wire followed Lord Clyde's rapid campaigns yard by yard. It brought the latest news from Calcutta to his breakfast tent, 1000 miles off by the time that he had bathed after his

morning march. It flashed back the details of the day's battle or assault to the Governor-General in Calcutta, before he sat down to dinner. "It is that accursed string that strangles us," exclaimed a mutineer pointing to the telegraph wire as he was led out to execution. The first line opened by Dalhousie connected Bombay with Calcutta, 1,409 miles distant by railway. By 1893, four million messages flashed to and fro across 1,30,000 miles of telegraphic wires every year throughout India.

In 1853-4, Dalhousie swept away the whole 'antiquated fabric of obstruction,' and introduced the modern postal system of India. "What could be more extravagant," its early critics argued, "or indeed more unjust, than to levy the same charge on two letters, one of which was to be delivered in the adjoining street, and the other on the opposite side of India!" Formerly, most of the mail was official only; letters were charged according to the distance covered, and that in cash payment (with 'baksheesh' for the postman). Dalhousie introduced the simple system of postage stamps. This, says Hunter, "has done more than perhaps his railways, or his telegraphs, and possibly as much as even the great system of Public Instruction... in revolutionising the old stagnant and self-isolated life of India". It will at once be realised that there is no exaggeration in this remark, if it is remembered that the dissemination of knowledge through the newspapers and periodical or other literature has become possible only because of the distributing agency of the post-office. The postal service covered, before the close of the nineteenth century, a distance of 80,000 miles, distributed 360,000,000 letters annually, through 23,000 post-offices and letter-boxes. The number of letters posted in the whole of India in 1854 (i.e., before the half-anna postage was introduced by Dalhousie) was 19 millions, mostly official; in 1860, it had increased to 47 millions, mostly private.

Dalhousie also created the Public Works Department as well as the Department of Public Instruction. If the entire credit for the latter does not belong to Dalhousie, his personal share in the extension and reorganisation of Indian education was by no means small. In the pre-Dalhousie period there was no separate P.W.D., but the Military Board looked after even civil construction. In 1847, the total expenditure on public works of all sorts in all India was only £2,60,000; in 1856 it had increased to 2½ millions. 'Dalhousie did not give roads, canals, court-houses, jails, treasuries and the whole fabric of civilised administration to the Punjab only; no province escaped his attention, and the routes throughout all India, with their strongly con-

structed bridges and permanent metalled-ways, date their improvements from him... He realized that the operations of civil engineering are best conducted by civil engineers... He endeavoured, by establishing and encouraging engineering schools in each of the three Presidencies, to rear up an indigenous branch of the profession within India itself.

Lastly, the famous Dispatch of Sir Charles Wood, in July 1854, in the opinion of Dalhousie, "left nothing to be desired, if, indeed, it did not authorise and direct that more should be done than is within our present grasp" in the field of public education. "A vast network," as Hunter states, "of educational institutions has, under the system thus initiated, been spread over India... They advance, by well-ordered upward steps, to the Vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular Schools, the High Schools, the Affiliated Colleges and the Universities. The whole forms a complete graduation of Public Instruction under the direction and control of the State. This was the crowning act of consolidation accomplished in India under Lord Dalhousie. It has set in motion new forces, intellectual and political, whose magnitude it is impossible to gauge, but which the British Government now finds itself compelled to reckon with." The three Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were incorporated in 1857 (under Canning); they were modelled after London University. But in view of their inherited defects, which were to a certain extent corrected by the remodelling of their proto-type in 1858, it has been pertinently observed by a critic of Indian education: "Perhaps it would have contributed more to the welfare of the nation had the University Acts been passed in 1859 instead of in 1857."

3. Chastened Autocracy

1857 was a momentous year in the making of modern India. The Great Rising of that year marked the end of one epoch and its suppression the beginning of another. It was the 'swan song' of the India that was; and the British victory in that deadly struggle was the herald of a new age. We definitely set our face thereafter towards a future undreamt of in the past: towards our modern destiny as we now conceive of it. For the British it was a Pyrrhic victory: a triumph which inevitably paved the way for the ending of their Empire in India. But that end was also their fulfilment. Up to the total transfer of the Government of India to the British Crown in 1858, the Company's administration was an autocracy in spite of its professed or actual benevolence. Though the form of that

government remained materially unaffected immediately, even under the Act "for the better government of India", India as well as Britain suffered a "sea change" as the result of the experiences of 1857, which appreciably affected our mutual relations and attitudes towards each other. In the following pages we shall see how British autocracy was considerably chastened and gradually converted, at first into a more responsive, and then into a more representative character. Finally, it gave place to an increasingly responsible government, culminating in the recognition of Indian independence.

Few events in Indian history have given rise to greater controversies than the momentous happenings of 1857-58. While British writers have persisted in speaking of the 'Mutiny', some Indians at any rate have called the Great Rising "the Indian War of Independence". Even among contemporary Englishmen there was uncertainty as to its real cause or causes. Sir John Lawrence, for instance, held that the 'Mutiny' had its origin in the army and that "its proximate cause was the cartridge affair and nothing else." Sir James Outram, on the contrary, believed that it was the result of "a Muhammadan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievances"; the cartridge incident merely "precipitated the Mutiny before it had been thoroughly organized and before adequate arrangements had been made for making the Mutiny a *first step to a popular insurrection*". Queen Victoria, in one of her letters, referred to the "bloody civil war" to avert whose repetition was the central purpose of her benign Proclamation. In the opinion of P. E. Roberts, "The Mutiny was exploited alike to revive the vanished glories of the Mughal Empire... and to re-establish the power of the Maratha Peshwa". Nevertheless, he adds, "The attempt to summon back the ghost of Maratha supremacy was, as it were, only the political second thought of the Mutiny, and came too late for success, when the back of the rebellion was broken and the cause of the insurgents was obviously waning." Another aspect of the controversy centres round the stories of atrocities committed by Indians and Englishmen in the course of what appeared to both a deadly struggle for existence. War, shorn of its euphemisms, is always an inhuman affair: during 1857-8, when neither side sought or gave quarter, even the 'rules of war' were waived and 'man's inhumanity to man made countless angels weep'. There were blood-curdling atrocities on both sides which it will serve no noble purpose to recall. "On the other page of the account may be reckoned uncounted deeds of heroism, and numerous instances of loyalty, kindness, and unselfish devotion

which would do honour to human nature". In a brief survey like ours it is necessary to concentrate more on events than on opinions, more on facts of crucial importance than on happenings of a spectacular character which are attractive but of passing value. Inasmuch as the results were of greater consequence in the making of modern India, it will be more fruitful to ruminate over them rather than linger over the confused causes and the bewildering incidents of a purely military nature. These latter may be very briefly summarised.

Mutinies in the Company's armies were by no means rare. We have alluded to some of them before. The first one of a rather formidable character was that by British officers—not Indian sepoys—for 'double batta' in the time of Clive. Another of a like nature, though less dangerous, was the mutiny of the Madras officers, 'occasioned by the stoppage of certain perquisites on tent contracts enforced by Sir George Barlow in compliance with peremptory orders of the Directors.' Though the conspiracy extended to many stations, the punishments inflicted were few. Resolute action by Lord Minto and Sir Samuel Auchmuty (local 'commander-in-chief') brought round most of the recalcitrant officers to a sense of their duty (1809). Despite such examples of their better paid English officers, the sepoys never mutinied for the sake of emoluments. When they rose to strike it was because their 'native susceptibilities' were wounded by unimaginative orders. The first of this kind happened at Vellore, when Lord William Bentinck was Governor of Madras and Sir John Cradock was local C.-in-C., in 1806. 'The new regulations required the men to wear a novel pattern of turban, to train their beards in a particular way, and to abstain from putting sectarian marks on their foreheads'. On 10th July 1806, they suddenly seized the fort and massacred two European companies, 113 strong, including 14 officers. Troops from Arcot took 'swift vengeance', and a series of courts martial followed. Yet the officers clamoured for more executions. However, 'the spirit of sane moderation' shown by Lord Minto sealed off the incident without further repercussions. In October 1824, the 47th Native Infantry, stationed at Barrackpur (15 miles above Calcutta) refused to proceed to Rangoon by sea or to ground arms. To sail over '*kala pani*' was for them to lose caste which they would not do, and they remained sullen. 'A battery of European artillery, supported by two British regiments, then opened fire and killed many. Others were subsequently tried and hanged, and the number of the regiment was removed from the Army List.' "The business," says V. A. Smith, "was not

well managed by the military authorities. "The tragedy apparently might have been averted by judicious handling of the men, without sacrifice of indispensable discipline." The lessons of these incidents were ill-learned by the Company's government. Consequently, during the thirteen years preceding the great explosion of 1857, there were at least four mutinies; the regiments concerned being the 34th N.I. in 1844, the 22nd N.I. in 1849, the 66th N.I. in 1850, and the 38th N.I. in 1852.

The significance of these portents was never realised before the storm actually burst. Indeed, as Flora A. Steel has penetratingly observed, "the greatest cause of the Mutiny was the ignorance of Englishmen." They were resting too complacently on the crest of a human volcano that was by all symptoms about to erupt. There were, of course, some who were sensible enough to apprehend trouble well in advance; but their fears went unheeded. Sleeman, as we noted before, warned Dalhousie that "the annexation of Oudhe would cost the British power more than the value of ten such kingdoms, and would inevitably lead to a mutiny of the Sepoys." Thomas Munro, a generation earlier had declared with prophetic insight, "The spirit of independence will spring up in this army long before it is ever thought of among the people." The reason was obvious: the army was well organised and conscious of its power; it only needed an incentive. Sir Charles Metcalfe stated: "I expect to wake up one fine day and find India lost to the English Crown." Viscount Canning himself had a strange premonition which made him, on the eve of his departure from England, discern "in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud . . . , at first no bigger than a man's hand but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst, and overwhelm us with ruin." But, with all these portents, Fate seemed to have plotted to bring about a catastrophe such as India had not witnessed before.

It is a peculiar trait of human nature that, when a calamity takes place, we generally blame it on others, and we assume airs of injured innocence. Our superficial psychology also seeks to explain unexpected events in terms of the trivial instead of going to the root causes. If a near and dear one has tuberculosis, it is not infrequently that hypersensitive relations would have others believe that it is nothing more serious than a cold or malaria. So it was with 1857. The 'mutiny' was caused by the greased cartridges; the superstitious natives could not appreciate the series of benevolent reforms introduced by Bentinck and Dalhousie; the only folly of the English was the reduction

of British troops and their maldistribution. It is surprising to find Marshman emphatically declaring: "Neither the old resumptioms, nor the spread of the English, nor the attempt to teach the females, nor the diffusion of knowledge, nor the railway, nor the telegraph, nor all other causes which have been conjectured, put together, were sufficient to account for the savage mutiny of a hundred thousand sepoys; while the delirious alarm created by *the story of the greased cartridges is fully adequate to the effect.*" Closer scrutiny will disclose how shallow is this diagnosis of the great upheaval of 1857-8.

The trouble started on 29th March 1857, at Barrackpur, near Calcutta, when Mangal Pandey, a Brahman, shot his adjutant who was an Englishman. His comrades simply looked on. But the execution of Mangal Pandey lit the first fire in Barrackpur cantonment. In the course of March and April, some twenty-five such fires were seen in the distant Punjab, round about Ambala. Though alarming and somewhat mysterious in their synchronisation, these premonitions were not seriously attended to until the outbreak at Meerut (less than 40 miles north of Delhi) on Sunday, 10th May. It was occasioned by the disarming and parading of 85 Indian cavalrymen who had refused to touch the objectionable cartridges. They were handcuffed and marched off to prison as a warning to the rest. As early as 24th January, General Hearsey (what an irony in the name!) had reported from Dum Dum the existence of "an unpleasant feeling" which he ascribed to rumours as to the preparation of the new cartridges which contained or were supposed to contain the fat of cows and pigs. General hearsay, indeed, spread the fires all over Hindusthan. On 10th May the incited Indian troops rose in revolt while their English officers and comrades were at church, it being Sunday evening. After indulging in arson and looting, and massacring every English man, woman and child they could lay their hands on, at Meerut, the maelstrom poured into Delhi, where they proclaimed the old Bahadur Shah again as the Emperor of Hindusthan. The English had ordered the helpless Imperial puppet to vacate even his palace, and Canning had informed him that the title of 'Emperor' should not be used by his successors. What followed must necessarily take more space than we can find here. The 'mutiny' took full two years to quell finally and completely. Its major events were, however, confined to Delhi, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Rohilkhand, Central India and Bundelkhand. For the rest, 'the campaigns degenerated into a bewildering maze of local risings, massacres, sieges, attacks, and reprisals, indescribable except by means of

interminable details.' The massacre of the innocents at Cawnpore, including a large number of women and children among them, was the most heinous part of the whole tragedy, which no amount of gloss can extenuate; yet the reprisals under Neill could not have taken a more savage form. Each suspected culprit was, under the lash, made to lick the blood-stains from an appointed space and then immediately hanged. (*The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p.752). The siege of Lucknow and the relief of the Residency, after repeated attempts, was one of the most heroic episodes of the war. The city was mastered by Sir Colin Campbell (Lord Clyde) in March 1858. Delhi had been reoccupied and the Emperor and his family captured on 21st September 1857. The two sons of Bahadur Shah, and a grandson, were shot without reason and without trial by Lieutenant Hodson of the Intelligence Department, who apprehended the 'Emperor'. In January 1858, the old man was condemned to exile in Rangoon, where he died in 1862, at the age of eighty-seven—one of the most pathetic figures in history—the last scion of Akbar to wear his Imperial crown. The slayer of the princes, Hodson, was killed by the mutineers at Lucknow in March 1858.

It was consoling to contemporary Englishmen to call the great upheaval a mere 'mutiny'. That simple designation put it on a par with the several risings previously known, and served to throw the entire blame 'on the other fellows' guilty of the palpable breach of army discipline. Since, this time, it was on an unprecedented scale, it also justified the executions (hangings and blowings from the guns "in oriental fashion") *en masse*. But what of Bahadur Shah, the 'Emperor', Tatia Topey, the Hereward the Wake and Robin Hood of the rising, Nana Saheb, adopted son of Bajirao II, and claimant to the title of Peshva, Laxmibai, Rani of Jhansi, "the best and bravest of the rebel leaders", as General Hugh Rose (who fought against her) called her, and Kumar Singh of Jagdishpur (Bihâr), Maulavi Ahmad Shah of Fyzabad who "had twice foiled Sir Colin Campbell", and a host of others who were the real leaders of the Great Rising, and yet were not 'sepoys' to be court-martialed. Malletson writing about the Maulavi says: "If a patriot is a man who plots and fights for the independence, wrongfully destroyed, of his native country, then most certainly the Moulvie was a true patriot. He had not stained his sword by assassination, he had connived at no murders; he had fought manfully, honourably, and stubbornly in the field against the strangers who had seized his country; and his memory is entitled to the respect of the brave and true-hearted of all nations." There were thousands of others,

Hindus and Muslims, who participated in the great struggle, and merited such praise. None of them was required to bite the polluting cartridge which is supposed to have caused the deluge of blood, Indian and British, during well nigh two years.

Secondly, the myth of paucity of British forces in the country and their maldistribution. Marshman speaks of the "savage mutiny of a hundred thousand sepoys". A vast majority of them belonged, according to most British writers, to the Bengal Army. The strength of that army, on 10th May 1857, was 151,361, of whom 22,698 were Europeans, and 128,663 Indians. That works out to about 15 per cent. Europeans, as against the 19 per cent. in the total armies of the Company. The difference of a bare 4 per cent. by itself cannot account for the impressive contrast between the loyalty of the Madras, Bombay and Punjab armies, and the rebelliousness of the Bengal Army. The latter fought with a tenacity and courage of desperation which could not have been cowed down even by the presence of a larger percentage of Europeans in their midst. The fact is that the Bengal Army (recruited exclusively from the U.P. and Bihar) was permeated with the discontentment of their province. The causes of this were deep-rooted as well as far-reaching. Races with more martial traditions like the Sikhs, Rajputs and Gurkhas not only remained loyal, but also actively supported the British. This was by deliberate choice, not dictated by fear of a high percentage of British troops stationed among them. Good will was worth more than any number of British battalions. That is why the Queen proclaimed very wisely: "in their contentment is our best security". The obedience of the sepoys, as Thomas Munro discerned, depended upon their genuine respect for their British officers: "All that is necessary is that they shall have lost their present high respect for their officers and the European character; and whenever this happens they will rise against us." The state of the army was thus described by Lord Dalhousie in 1851: "Commanding officers are inefficient; brigadiers are no better; divisional officers are worse than either because older and more done; and at the top of all they send commanders-in-chief seventy years old." Lord Roberts, too, wrote: "Brigadiers of seventy, Colonels of sixty, and Captains of fifty. It is curious to note how nearly every military officer who held a command or a high position on the staff in Bengal when the Mutiny broke out, disappeared from the scene in the first few weeks and was never heard of officially again." "The system," writes Dodwell, "unhappily weeded out many of those best fitted to command the

respect and affection of their men". Or, again, in the words of Sir Lepel Griffin, the 'Mutiny' resulted in disbanding "a lazy, pampered army, which though in its hundred years of life it had done splendid service, had become impossible." What retrieved the situation was the national character of the English: "their readiness to die in order to retrieve the mistakes they lived to make." They have in several struggles lost every battle except the last.

The ultimate victory of the British was due as much to the steadfast loyalty of Dost Muhammad of Afghanistan, Ghulab Singh of Kashmir, the Sikhs of the Punjab, Jang Bahadur and the Gurkhas of Nepal, the people and princes of Rajputana, of Shinde and Holkar, of Sir Dinkarrao of Gwalior and Sir Salar Jang of Hyderabad, and the entire southern peninsula, apart from the pertinacity and heroism of British generals like Havelock, Outram, Nicholson, the Lawrences, Neill, Campbell, and others. The British navy, too, played its silent but useful part in replenishing the depleted military resources in India, especially in bringing reinforcements from England, from Persia, from Singapore, etc. The victory was one of organised government against the 'spontaneous anarchy' of a people who, however heroic and zealous, were without centralised leadership, and without a positive aim and constructive plan. As Sri V. D. Savarkar has frankly put it, "If there had been set clearly before the people at large a new ideal attractive enough to captivate their hearts, the growth and completion of the Revolution would have been as successful and as grand as its beginning... The Revolution worked out successfully as far as the destructive part was concerned; but, as soon as the time for construction came, indifference, mutual fear, and want of confidence sprang up."

This brings us to the most vital part of our discussion: What did the "Revolution" referred to above stand for or aim at? It was rooted in reaction against the progressive trends started by the British. India of the mid-nineteenth century (i.e., that part of India which brought about the Great Rising) did not react to the challenge or impact of the West as Japan of the same period. Our saner or revised attitude was undoubtedly strengthened, if it was not generated, by the triumph of the British, supported by large sections of Indians. This last element perhaps justified the Queen's description of the struggle as the "bloody civil war". Whatever the motives of those Indians who fought against their own countrymen and in support of the foreigners they were not "traitors" as Savarkar has dubbed them, but the unconscious instruments of our modern destiny: they were the indirect makers of modern India.

Those who were defeated looked backwards; those who were victorious looked to the future. The heroes of the Great Rising fought and suffered with a sincerity and zeal worthy of a more enlightened cause. Nana Saheb and the Wahabi leaders who raised the cry of "religion in danger", and carried on incessant propaganda throughout the length and breadth of the country, through the towns and the villages, among civil servants, no less than among sepoys, openly as well as insidiously, in temple and mosque, in princes' palaces and poor men's cottages, did so in support of orthodoxy. They got a good handle in the over-zealous activities of the Christian missionaries who were patronised by Englishmen of all ranks, official and non-official, civil and military, who made unguarded statements that seemed to justify the fears of orthodox Indians. Even the cautious Governor-General Canning believed that "heads of families, and men of wealth and good position, are generally persuaded that their grandsons, if not their sons, will renounce their religion for Christianity." An Act, at the same time, was passed validating the rights of converts to a share in the family property. Little wonder that the General Enlistment Order, making it obligatory on fresh recruits to serve beyond the homes of orthodoxy, and the greased cartridges, taken in the context of the abolition of *sati*, infanticide, encouragement of widow remarriage, women's education, western medicine and surgery, science, railways (wherein the pariah could travel along with the Brahman), common messes for prisoners of all castes in the jails, teaching of the Bible in missionary schools, etc., were all construed as attempts to Westernise, Europeanise and Christianise India. People who had reconciled themselves to their loss of political freedom, accepting the English as only a fresh change of rulers (even like the change of seasons), at once raised a hue and cry over the prospects of losing their orthodoxy. These flames were naturally fanned and exploited by reactionaries of another type, viz., dispossessed *zamindars* and *talukdars* (20,000 holdings had been confiscated in Bombay Presidency alone, as a result of the *quo warranto* proceedings of the Inam Commission), princes and *nawabs* deprived of their States, titles and even pensions (to wit, the 'lapses' of Dalhousie), and finally the soldiery in the service of the escheated principalities, with their occupations gone—all alike were interested in overthrowing the new order of the English. Their spirit is symbolised by the nickname they gave to the Educational Inspector's Office in Patna: it was *Shaitani Daftar* or 'Satan's Office'! The defeat of the Great Rising of 1857 was, therefore, the defeat of this outlook. In the words of

Savarkar, again, "If it was only to re-establish the former internecine strife, if it was to bring again the same state of affairs as before, the same Moguls, the same Marathas, and the same old quarrels—a condition, being tired of which, the nation, in a moment of mad folly, allowed foreigners to come in—if it were only for this... the populace did not think it worth their while to shed their blood for it."

Sir Lepel Griffin made the thoughtful remark: "Perhaps a more fortunate occurrence than the Mutiny of 1857 never occurred in India. It swept the Indian sky of many clouds. It disbanded a lazy, pampered army...; it replaced an unprogressive, selfish and commercial system of administration by one liberal and enlightened..." Though Vincent Smith considered this characterisation of the Company's administration "after 1833" as rather harsh, he agreed that the rising of 1857 "gave the death blow to the antiquated system which interposed the mechanism of the East India Company between the Crown and the Indian Empire. The day for that mechanism, which had done good work in its appointed time, was past." "A river of blood," as Rushbrook Williams remarks, "separated the races, at any rate in Northern India; and its bridging was to be a matter of some difficulty". Yet, Time, the great healer, began ere long to repair the damage done. In this vital task, the attitude of 'Clemency Canning' and the sagacious Queen Victoria proved invaluable assets. "There is a rabid and indiscriminate vindictiveness abroad," the Governor-General wrote to Her Majesty, "even amongst many who ought to set a better example, which it is impossible to contemplate without a feeling of shame for one's countrymen." The Queen responded stating: 'Lord Canning will easily believe how entirely the Queen shares his feeling of sorrow and indignation at the unchristian spirit shown, alas, to a great extent here by the public towards India in general'. It is the better to be appreciated, therefore, that Canning had the coolness and strength of mind to declare: "I will not govern in anger. Justice, and that as stern, as inflexible, as law and might can make it, I will deal out. But I will never allow an angry and indiscriminate act or word to proceed from the Government, so long as I am responsible for it." How profoundly the statesmanship of England was affected by the great upheaval and the stupendous effort required to master it, was reflected alike in the substance and language of the Queen's Proclamation.

The Queen assured the princes and people of India 'that all treaties and engagements made with them by and

under the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted... We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions;... We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of native princes as our own;... and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure... We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and we will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India.

The keynote of the new policy was struck in the notable conclusion of the Proclamation: 'In their prosperity will be our strength, *in their contentment our security*, and *in their gratitude our best reward*.' "In general," Rushbrook-Williams observes, "it must be said that the British (after 1857)... began to think far more of the difficulties to which their position in India was exposed, than had hitherto been the case... This revelation caused the British to regard Indian aspirations with an eye that was more watchful and less benevolent than had previously been the case... Indeed, the initiative of progress passed by degrees out of the hands of the British, and was taken up in an increasing degree by the educated middle classes of India. Before the mutiny it was the British administration which had pressed ahead recklessly; the retarding force was applied by the conservatism of the Indian population. After 1857 the position became by slow degrees reversed. The demand for progress arose not from Government but from the people; Government appeared more and more as the 'retarding and conservative element. This change, which is by far the most significant consequence of the sepoy rebellion, is gradually more manifest as the nineteenth century draws to a close. Its importance is still not generally recognised."

NOTE: THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The purpose of this note is neither to describe the Industrial Revolution of England and elsewhere nor to trace its far-reaching effects in India in any detail. Its limited object is to draw the attention of the reader to an important aspect of Indo-British history which is not generally remembered in the midst of our preoccupation with the political narra-

tive. A more detailed study of this should take a volume all to itself.

The first fact to be remembered in this connexion is the synchronism of the rise of modern industry in England and the growth of the British dominion in India. It is obvious that the latter was greatly influenced and helped by the former.

Simply stated, the Industrial Revolution comprised the invention of machinery and the use, at first, of steam-power then electricity, which resulted in the enormous increase in the production of finished goods and simultaneous demand for markets for their disposal and raw materials for their manufacture. In meeting these requirements, England which had just lost the American colonies (U.S.A.) was more than compensated by her conquests of Canada and India.

The introduction of the railway and telegraph, which have been referred to already, were a part of this transformation. Apart from the interests of trade, they also facilitated the transport of troops and military communications. The first steamship used for such a purpose was the *Diana* in the first Rangoon expedition (1824). Lord Bentinck created a steamship fleet for the navigation of the Ganges, but his plans for similar communication with England via the Suez did not materialise until 1843. The first Railway line was laid in India ten years later.

The economic exploitation of India by England was largely necessitated and stimulated by the Industrial Revolution. The Indian handicrafts suffered a rapid decline consequently. In no other industry were the adverse effects of the revolution felt so keenly as in the manufacture of textiles. Here the remarks of J. L. Hammond, already partly quoted, deserve to be cited in extenso. This is what he writes:

"In the eighteenth century there had been a scarcity of raw cotton, and England and France competed for it... Meanwhile the fortunes of war and politics had put the people that had taught mankind the old method of cotton manufacture in the power of the people that was teaching mankind the new. The last struggle between England and France in the East had ended. England was beginning to close her grasp on India when Crompton and Arkwright were perfecting their inventions... England was now producing something that India could buy. A British Government was not likely to treat a distant community that had come under its control more unselfishly than it had treated the British colonies in America. Heavy duties were placed upon Indian cottons and silks in the home tariff, and when

the Indian market, hitherto the monopoly of the East India Company, was thrown open in 1813, the duties imposed on cotton goods entering India were merely nominal. In 1831 a petition was presented from natives of Bengal, complaining without success of the British duty of 10 per cent. on manufactured cottons, and 24 per cent. on manufactured silks. The effect of political control, combined with the inventions, was seen in the figures of our trade with India. Very little yarn was sent to India in 1815; over 3,000,000 lb. in 1829; 800,000 yards of British cotton cloth in 1815; 45,000,000 yards in 1830. In 1832 British cotton exports to the territories of the East India Company (which included China) were worth £1,500,000. If India had been in the hands of a rival Power anxious either to develop a new cotton industry of its own, or to develop a native cotton industry in India, Lancashire would not have found so rich a market for her yarn and piecegoods." (*The Rise of Modern Industry*, pp.185-6).

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE STEEL-FRAME AT WORK

1. *India in Transition.* 2. *From Calcutta to Delhi.*

1. *India in Transition*

"WHATEVER may be, in the western world, the proper division between ancient and modern history," observes Sir Alfred Lyall, "it is safe to affirm that the dividing line between ancient and modern India is marked everywhere by the date at which each province or kingdom fell under British dominion." In other words, according to this view, the history of modern India began with the completion of our loss of freedom everywhere! In the introductory chapter of this book we considered the reasons for commencing our modern history with the advent of the Mughals. In a specific sense, however, we might concede with Sir Alfred that, "if it were necessary to draw a single line for India as a whole, the epoch (or rather the latest phase of it) that might be taken would be the assumption by Queen Victoria of the direct government of India under the Crown, in 1858." In the preceding chapter we characterised the Great Rising of 1857 as the 'swan song' of the 'old order' in India. But it is well to remember that, in history, there are no sharp and clear cut divisions: the old and the new get mixed up, with a dovetailing which makes of the dividing line a zig-zag rather than a straight line. As a matter of fact, there are several dividing lines, each representing the parting of the ways in a specific walk of life. Thus we have to discriminate between the political, social, economic, and cultural lines of demarcation during the period of transition which still continues to operate in all fields except the political; and this last only in the sense that our national independence was recognised by Britain from a particular moment in time (15th August, 1947). In all other respects, India is still in transition. We shall, in the present and the next chapter, consider this only from one angle, viz. as the last phase of our dependent relationship with Britain.

It is convenient to study this closing period of British supremacy in two parts; (1) the period during which 'representative' political institutions were gradually developed in India, and (2) the period in which 'responsible government' was experimentally introduced culminating in the recognition of our independence. The link between

these two stages is provided by the term 'responsive'. Before the transfer to the Crown, the Company's administration was neither 'representative' nor 'responsive'. It was an 'autocracy', though 'benevolent' in its reformist acts. Those reforms were introduced, not because the vast majority of the people of India demanded them, but in spite of their opposition. Thus, *sati* was abolished in spite of widespread conservative opposition; occidental education was thrust upon us despite the opposition of the 'orientalists', Indian and British; and, finally, the Great Rising of 1857 was ruthlessly crushed by the benevolent despots. The 'paternalism' of the English Government of India up to 1858, therefore, could but ill disguise its essentially unresponsive autocracy. Nevertheless, as we remarked earlier, that autocracy was considerably chastened by the experiences of the two years 1857-59. Not only was there an impressive change in the government at the top on that account, but also a mellowing of the autocratic character of our rulers. We have seen this reflected in the spirit of the Queen's Proclamation; we shall presently see it, too, in the gradual transformation of the British Government, in the nineteenth century and after, in its attitude and policy towards us, not less than in the machinery of administration. This period is that of the *Viceroy*s as distinguished from the Company's *Governors-General*.

It was a happy sign of statesmanship that made the last Governor-General under the Company also the first Viceroy under the Crown. So far as an individual could make it, this enabled Lord Canning to cover the revolution—for it was nothing less that had taken place in 1858—with the appearance of a formal change of sovereignty in England. It had its analogy in the appointment of Warren Hastings, already Governor of Bengal, as the first Governor-General under the Regulating Act of 1773. But a closer parallel is provided by our selection of Lord Mountbatten to be our first constitutional Governor-General of free India. Yet, as we noted, the Act of 1856 for "the better government of India" hardly made any difference in its formal character immediately. It introduced no changes in India: in England, it created a Secretary of State advised by a Council, instead of the Board of Control with its President. The first Indian Councils Act was passed by Parliament in 1861. Corresponding to the old Charter Acts of the earlier days, two more Indian Councils Acts followed in 1892 and 1909. It will be advantageous to deal with all of them together after we have considered their general background. Their

one underlying purpose was not 'freedom broadening down from precedent to precedent', but only the 'increasing association of Indians' with their masters who felt that such an expedient might well serve to 'grease' the relations between the two. The upheaval of 1857-8 and the manner in which it was suppressed had left in their trail traces of mutual fear and distrust in the minds of the rulers and the ruled, which took more than half a century to die down. The resulting estrangement, if not embitterment between the two races, took two seemingly divergent lines at first; but, happily, a way of reconciliation was ultimately found and followed. We shall trace the nationalist part of this 'unity in diversity' in the last chapter. Here we shall review the conduct of the British in India during the period of transition.

To rely more upon guns and bayonets than upon goodwill is a symptom of fear and autocracy. Yet that was exactly what the British did in the wake of the transfer to the Crown. The sweet words of the Queen's Proclamation 'battered no parsnips' for the Indians: they constituted the velvet glove that covered the mailed fist. The destruction of the Bengal Army during the revolt called for a reconstruction, and that occasion was availed of to remove the great disparity in numbers and strength between the Indian and European sections of the armed forces, which was believed to have encouraged the rising. "Thus by 1863 the Europeans serving in India numbered 65,000, the Sepoys 140,000; the first had been increased, the second diminished, by half. The proportion then established, of something less than one to two, was roughly maintained right down to 1914. . . . In the reorganized force the artillery was exclusively European". (Dodwell). The mixed system of recruitment was definitely abandoned, and the class (or rather caste) system was introduced. The Pathans, Punjabi Mussalmans, Sikhs, Rajputs, and Gurkhas, who were largely helpful in quelling the revolt of 1857, were everywhere preferred to the Bhayyas of U.P. and Bihar who had constituted the bulk of the rebellious Bengal Army, under the preposterous dichotomy of 'martial' and 'non-martial' races. These and other military 'reforms' made the British feel considerably more secure than they were in the critical mid-nineteenth century.

A second line of defence was built up by winning the loyalty of the ruling princes. Their passive or active support of the British during the crisis of 1857 was rewarded, not merely by the assurances of the Queen, but also by the grant of *sanads* of adoption guaranteeing their successions. They were caught in the Imperial net like goldfish with

the bait of sonorous and high-sounding titles, and gun-salutes that signified only the degrees of their subjection to the Paramount power. The reality was that, from being sovereigns once, they had now become subjects of the British Crown. Even their normal successions would not be valid until they were ratified by the British Government. Yet the princes vied with one another in their obsequious displays of loyalty whenever the British Prince of Wales, or the Duke of Edinburgh, or His Majesty himself, set foot on Indian soil. They were not free even within their own States. "The presence, at the capitals of the larger protected States, of the subsidiary British troops," wrote Lyall, "is not only a guarantee of a ruler's rights, but also of his duties towards his subjects". It might be added, "and towards the Paramount power". Little mindful of this constant reminder of British authority, they organised Imperial Service Troops "for the protection of the common country", as Dodwell has euphemistically put it. "The first (i.e. subsidiary troops) were established and maintained by the use of pressure and coercion; the second (Imperial Service Troops) sprang from a spontaneous offer. The first marked the mistrust of the Paramount Power; the second the union of interests between the states and the Empire." Shorn of the make-believe of "partnership", as Lord Hastings said as early as 1814, "In our treaties with them (i.e. the princes) we recognize them as independent sovereigns. Then we send a Resident to their courts. Instead of acting in the character of an ambassador, he assumes the functions of a dictator..." This was not less true even more than a century later. Though one might have been flattered by being styled 'His Exalted Highness', all enjoyed their privileges equally on sufferance by the British. As Lord Curzon declared at Bahawalpur in 1903, the political system of India "represents a series of relationships that have grown up between the Crown and the Indian Princes under widely differing historical conditions, but which in process of time have gradually conformed to a single type". "The foundation-stone of the whole system," declared Lord Minto, "is the recognition of the identity of interests between the Imperial Government and the Durbars... I trust that the ruling chiefs of India will ever bear in mind that the interests of themselves and their people are identical with those of the Supreme Government." What this signified in practice was illustrated by the action taken by the Supreme Government in the cases of Baroda, Mysore and Manipur.

In 1874-5 Mulharrao Gaikwad was charged with gross misrule and an attempt to poison the British Resident,

Colonel Phayre. A commission consisting of three British officials along with the Maharajas of Gwalior and Jaipur, Sir Dinkarrao and Sir Salar Jang, was asked to investigate. The result, as P. E. Roberts has remarked, was "unfortunate". The English commissioners found the Gaikwad guilty, but the Indians declared him not guilty. The charge of attempting to poison Phayre having proved a fairy tale, the verdict of the Europeans was vindicated, none the less, by gubernatorial action. "Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State, found his way out of a very delicate and difficult position by causing Lord Northbrook to proclaim the deposition of the Gaikwar, not on the finding of the commission, the particular charge they investigated being dropped, but on his gross misgovernment and notorious misconduct." So "the right thing was done," as Northbrook's biographer Mallet said, "but the manner of doing it was questionable".

The case of Mysore illustrates a contrary policy. It was one of restoration of a State sequestered by the Paramount power in 1831. Fifty years later, in 1881, Lord Ripon rendered unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's, but with important reservations. Three of the stipulations were particularly significant: (1) that the Maharaja should "at all times remain faithful in allegiance and subordination to Her Majesty"; (2) that he should bind himself to "the good government of the people of Mysore"; and (3) co-operate with the Supreme Government in several matters of administration, such as, telegraphs, railways, the manufacture of opium and salt, the extradition of criminals, and the use of the currency of British India.

In Manipur, near Assam, there was a rebellion or civil war in 1890. The Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, intervened on the ground that "it is admittedly the right and duty of government to settle the successions in the protected states of India generally". The rebel leaders including the *Senapati* were executed, the chiefship was conferred upon a minor of the ruling family, and Manipur was administered during his nonage by a British Political Agent who took the opportunity of abolishing slavery in the State.

The character of a government is often revealed as much by what it fails to do as by what it does. Distrust is next cousin to fear, and both influenced the policy of the British Government since 1858. Even the princes reduced to such subordination as to render them totally innocuous were not to be completely trusted. The Royal Titles Act of 1876, by which Queen Victoria assumed the Imperial title of *Kaiser-i-Hind* or Empress of India, was to inaugurate "a new policy

by virtue of which the Crown of England should henceforth be identified with the hopes, the sympathies and the interests of the Native Aristocracy". But the change of title also implied another undeclared subtle change of character in the system. "The Queen was a constitutional ruler; the Empress of India would be an Oriental despot." (H. G. Rawlinson). This was illustrated in a peculiar way. Lord Lytton had proposed to establish an Indian Privy Council composed of the leading Indian princes for the purpose of joint consultation with the Governor-General in matters of common interest. But the idea was rejected by the home authorities on the ground that "it might give rise to common understandings and united pressure such as might embarrass the Government of India". A Chamber of Princes was created in 1921, when it was too late to fulfil the purpose Lord Lytton had in view forty-five years earlier.

The entire system of government inaugurated by the transfer to the Crown was, unfortunately, characterised by the same policy of distrust. There was no Indian in the Viceroy's Council until 1909, when Mr. S. P. (later Lord) Sinha was appointed Law Member by Mr. Morley. That Liberal Secretary of State, the limitations of whose liberalism are noticed elsewhere, had already in 1907, much against the opposition of his own councillors, decided to nominate two Indians on the India Council (in England). The first to fill these places were Mr. K. G. Gupta and Mr. S. H. Bilgrami, "considered at the time as 'safe' appointments and based upon the principle of representation of classes and communities".

The note at the end of this chapter more closely explains the relations between the 'Home Government' and the Government of India. Here it may be summarily stated that the real and effective controlling authority in all matters concerning India was the Secretary of State in England. Northcote pithily described the government set up in 1858 as "an executive machinery in India subject to a controlling machinery in England". It was deeply modified in its inner working as Dodwell has observed, by "one of those silent processes which are often going forward behind the external forms of political institutions, and which signify a change in the balance of political power. In the present instance it was the growth of the English political element in the Government of India at the expense of the Anglo-Indian official". From the Indian point of view, this was also at the expense of the Indians who were either not yet fully trusted or considered fit to bear high responsibilities. While, on the one hand, Lord Dalhousie vigorously defended the dignity of his high office

against the encroachments of the Board of Control, which he characterised as "the Board of Interference", the Governor-General's powers in India were gradually increased, on the other, so as to make him virtually a dictator. Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General, started with no power over his Council; his successor, Cornwallis, was given the authority to overrule his Council; and, in the time of Canning, he acquired additional powers to lay down a procedure which only served to make him really supreme. If the Viceroy was away from Calcutta, he could act ignoring his Council altogether. "We may fairly regard Canning's rules," observes Dodwell, "as a permanent means of avoiding that Council Government which his predecessors could only escape by the expedient of leaving Calcutta." The essence of the rules framed by Canning was that every member of the Governor-General's Council was primarily held responsible for matters concerning the Department with which he was entrusted. This 'portfolio system' was first introduced by Canning, rather informally, in 1859. In 1861 he was formally authorised to make rules for the conduct of business: all orders made in accordance with such rules thereafter were to be deemed the acts of 'the Governor-General in Council'.

We cannot go into all aspects of this increasing authority of the Governor-General or Viceroy here. To mention only two more factors: the reduction of the emoluments of the Governor-General's Councillors (to £8,000 a year) and the increase of those of the Lieutenant-Governors to £10,000 a year, in 1853, tended not only to lower the status of the former, but also to put in the hands of the Governor-General (who appointed the latter) the power of patronage to which, humanly speaking, the councillors looked up. The Governor-General could promote them to the higher posts. Secondly, once every week, the Viceroy interviewed not only his Councillor who was the head of a Department, but also his Secretary "to make sure that important questions are not being settled in the Department without reference to the Viceroy". As Dodwell remarks, "This has an ugly appearance of going behind the member's back"; but "the idea of a dual consultation runs through the whole structure of the Government of India". Lastly, we might add that, just as the shortening of the distance (or rather time) between London and Calcutta through the laying of the deep sea cable increased the influence, if not also the power, of the Secretary of State over the Government of India, so too the improvement of the internal communications within India, through the railway and tele-

graph, served to increase the opportunities for regulating the affairs of the provinces by the Governor-General.

To start with, there were only three Governors of presidencies, viz. Bombay, Madras and Bengal. Of these, the last was made Governor-General at first, of Fort William or Bengal; and then 'of India'. The provinces created in the course of time were placed in charge of Lieutenant-Governors. The chief distinction between the old and the new consisted in the fact that, unlike the former, the new subordinate governors had no councils to advise them. Besides, they could not directly communicate with the home authorities, as could the governors of the 'Regulation Provinces'. While most of the smaller divisions were placed under Chief Commissioners, at any rate in the first instance, Agra, when it was separated from Bengal, was made a Lieutenant-Governor's province and yet classed with the 'Regulation Provinces'. In this category were Bengal, Bombay, Madras and Agra, where the laws administered in the presidency towns were derived from England and enforced by a Supreme Court; in the districts too, were 'formal pieces of legislation' or 'regulations' administered by the district courts, "which, though dependent on the Company's government, were completely independent," until they were subjected to the jurisdiction of the High Courts established in 1861. That was also the year in which the power of legislation, taken away from them in 1833, was restored to Madras and Bombay; but we shall deal with this later. The Non-Regulation Provinces were Sind, the Punjab, Oudh, etc. Over these the Governor-General in Council had power to make laws "not in accordance with the forms prescribed by the Charter Acts for legislation, but by executive orders." In organisation, too, the Non-regulation Provinces differed widely from the others: "The Deputy Commissioner at the head of a district, and the Commissioner at the head of a group of districts that formed a division, exercised as many powers as a subahdar under a Moghul or a Maratha prince." After 1858 the trend was toward the elimination of the distinction between the two types of administration. Uniformity and standardisation went hand in hand with the centralisation of policy and control. In the course of time, the creation of specialised Departments by the Central Government, with a Director-General at the head of each, took away all initiative from the local officers, and brought into existence an impersonal bureaucratic machine in place of the old richly personal administration such as that of Sir John Lawrence in the Punjab. The result was, as the Bombay Government stated before

the Decentralisation Commission: "All this is done in the name of efficiency; but the efficiency is unreal. Schemes and systems affecting to establish uniformity throughout the continent of India may appear complete and harmonious on paper... but when they clash with discordant local conditions, they must inevitably lead to inefficiency of administration, and to what is much worse than inefficiency, to popular discontent." It is very significant that popular discontent grew apace with the perfection of the bureaucratic machine. But of this we shall speak later. The linchpin of this administrative *Juggernaut* was the Indian Civil Service.

"There is one institution we will not interfere with, there is one institution we will not cripple, and that is the institution which built up the British Raj—the British Civil Service in India." So declared His Majesty's Government during a Parliamentary debate on 2nd August 1922. Lloyd George spoke of this Service as "the steel frame of the whole structure". Others have described it as 'the mainstay' or 'the sheet anchor' of the British Government in India. There was (and still is) no position to which a member of the I.C.S. could not (and still cannot) rise. Nevertheless, his peculiar tower of strength was the district over which he ruled like a Mughal *Kotwal*, with the status of a *Mansabdar* of rank. "He is the principal officer of Government in every branch of the executive administration of the district", wrote Sir John Strachey. "As the local representative of the Government through whom all the orders and measures of the ruling power are issued and made known to the people, and on whom the Government depends for information of every serious matter that occurs, he holds a position of great and exceptional importance." According to Sir William Hunter: "The District Officer, whether known as Collector-Magistrate or as Deputy-Commissioner, is the responsible head of his jurisdiction. Upon his energy and personal character depends ultimately the efficiency of our Indian Government. His own special duties are so numerous and so various as to bewilder the outsider; and the work of his subordinates, European and native, largely depends upon the stimulus of his personal example. His position has been compared to that of the French *prefect*; but such a comparison is unjust in many ways to the Indian District Officer. He is not a creature of the Home Office, who takes his colour from his chief, and represents only officialism; but an effective worker in every department of the public well-being, with a large measure of independence and of individual initiative."

The office of 'Collector', as we know, was first created in the time of Warren Hastings. He was, in 1772, not only a collector of revenue, but also a civil judge of some sort. Under Cornwallis, in 1787, the two functions (executive and judicial) were separated, only to be recombined by Lord Hastings, about 1818. Another important reversal of Cornwallis' policy by Hastings was the exclusion of the Indians from responsible offices. But later, there was a return to the policy of Cornwallis in this, despite the emphatic declaration in section 87 of the Charter Act of 1833, that 'no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the Company'; and the repetition of that assurance in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. The British Government thereby laid themselves open to the charge (as Lytton remarked) "of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear."

The scheme drafted by Macaulay in 1854, with some modifications made later, still characterises the "steel frame". "For more than half a century," writes Sir John Marriott, "some of the ablest men from Oxford and Cambridge and the great Public Schools took service in India and made the Indian public service a model of efficiency and purity. But recruitment hardly kept pace with Indian requirements." That shortage was made good, not by the admission of Indians, but by the drafting of soldiers and 'uncovenanted' civilians into the ranks of the higher civil service. This irregularity was corrected by the Civil Service Act of 1861 which also aimed at a stricter regulation of the Covenanted Service.* For the recruitment of the Covenanted Service, open competitive examinations were held in London, once every year, under the supervision of the Civil Service Commissioners, according to rules framed by the Secretary of State in Council. In 1860 the maximum age for the candidates at those examinations was 22; in 1866 it was lowered to 21, and in 1879 to 19. The effect of this lowering of the age limit was practically to make it impossible for Indian lads, in the existing social conditions of the times, to compete. Hence the

* The service was so called because "all the superior servants of the Company were required (as members of the I.C.S. still are) to subscribe for their pensions, but were at the same time required to enter into a covenant not to trade, or receive presents, etc." (Marriott).

persistent nationalist demand for holding simultaneous examinations in India. But this was never conceded. In 1886 Lord Dufferin appointed a Commission to go into the whole question, under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Aitchison. It consisted of 15 members of whom 5 were Indians. Nevertheless, strange to say, its findings cast serious doubts on the capacity of Indians (selected in India) "for high administrative office". The fact is that the Commission only emphasised "the importance of recruiting that service (which represented the only permanent English official element in India) with reference to the maintenance of English principles and methods of government". "Let there be no hypocrisy about our intention to keep in the hands of our own people those executive posts" frankly declared Sir John Strachey, "and there are not very many of them on which, and on our political and military power, our actual hold of the country depends."

The Public Services Commission of 1886 was appointed to make recommendations which would 'do full justice to the claims of India to higher and more extensive employment' in that service. It abolished the designation of "Covenanted Civil Service", and proposed a division of all the Public Services into (i) the Imperial, (ii) the Provincial, and (iii) the Subordinate Services. Only 61 (listed) posts in the higher rank, in the entire land, were declared open to promotion from the Provincial grades. Otherwise the Imperial class of servants, whose recruitment was the prerogative of the Secretary of State in Council, was almost exclusively British. For instance, none but British subjects of European descent were admitted to the higher Police examinations. Appointments in the P.W.D. and Forest departments were filled by Royal Engineers or by graduates of Cooper's Hill College, whose cost was borne by India, but to which admission was exceedingly difficult for Indians. In 1879 the Governor-General-in-Council had been authorised to make recommendations regarding promotions from the subordinate provincial ranks to the higher services. Even when such recommendations were proposed to be limited to no more than one-fifth, the authorities in England reduced the proportion to one-sixth. The consequence was that, even as late as 1912, according to the findings of the Islington (Royal) Commission, of which Messrs. Gokhale, Chaubal and Abdur Rahim were members (eight others being Europeans), out of 11,064 'higher' posts (i.e. those carrying a salary of Rs. 200 a month) only 42 per cent. were held by Indians; whilst out of 4,984 posts with a salary of Rs. 500 and more, only 19 per cent. were occupied by 'statutory'



Indians. Above Rs. 800 the fraction was reduced to a bare 10 per cent. "And as the salary rose higher and higher the number of Indians occupying posts became less and less until such posts were reached to which no Indian had ever been appointed." Between 1870 and 1914, out of 270 vacancies in the I.C.S. only 16 went to Indians. While we were denied a real share in the responsibilities of government, the hall-mark of British administration continued to be paternalistic. This was so from centre to periphery. Speaking of the Collector-Magistrate in the district, Wilson remarked: "He does in his smaller local sphere all that the Home Secretary superintends in England and a great deal more; for, he is the representative of a *paternal and not a constitutional government.*"

There were no internal wars during the viceregal period of our history. With the exception of the second Afghan war (1878-81) under Lytton and the third Burmese war (1885-86) under Dufferin, there were no other major military operations. The Tibetan expedition of Lord Curzon, in 1904, was inconsequential. Our North-West frontier was the only area which caused constant irritation, but working settlements were arrived at with the tribes from time to time. The most important of these were (1) with the Baluchis, in 1867, through the efforts of Sir Robert Sandeman; (2) with the Khan of Kalat, in 1876, resulting in the British acquisition of Quetta; (3) with the entire tribal zone, between 1893-95, as a consequence of the establishment of the "Durand Line" right in the heart of the tribal region; and (4) with the tribes of Waziristan and Malakand, in 1904-5, which created the stabler "Curzon Line" by the "withdrawal of British forces from advanced positions, employment of tribal forces in defence of tribal territory, concentration of British forces in British territory behind them as a safeguard and a support, improvement of communications in the rear". Nevertheless, the warning of Amir Abdur Rahman, on the setting up of the "Durand Line", continued to have force ever since. "In your cutting away from me those frontier tribes, who are people of my nationality, and my religion," he declared, "you will injure my prestige in the eyes of my subjects and will make me weak, and my weakness is injurious for your government." Another short Afghan war was provoked by Amir Amanullah in 1919, but a treaty was signed at Rawalpindi (August 1919) by which Amanullah was recognised as "King" and envoys were exchanged between London and Kabul.

"I object to fighting for prestige," Lord Mayo said; "and even those who may still think that killing people for the

sake of prestige is morally right, will hardly assert that the character and authority of the British arms in India are affected one way or another by skirmishes with wild frontier tribes." The same attitude was displayed by most of the Viceroys who were anxious to engage themselves in the work of peaceful reconstruction. Lawrence, who succeeded Elgin in 1863, enunciated this pacifist policy in unequivocal terms:

Should a foreign power, such as Russia, ever seriously think of invading India from without, or what is more probable, of stirring up the elements of disaffection or anarchy within it, our true policy, our strongest security, would then, we conceive, be found to lie in previous abstinence from entanglements either in Kabul, Kandahar or any similar outposts; in full reliance on a compact, highly equipped and disciplined army within our own territories or on our own border; in contentment, if not the attachment of the masses; in the sense of security of title and possession, with which our whole policy is gradually imbuing the minds of the principal chiefs and native aristocracy; in the construction of material works within British India, which enhance the comfort of the people while they add to our political and military strength; in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources; in quiet preparation for all contingencies which no Indian statesman should disregard and in a trust in the rectitude and honesty of our intentions, coupled with the avoidance of all sources of complaint which either invite foreign aggression or stir up restless spirits to domestic revolt.

This puts in a nutshell the practical wisdom (from the British point of view) of the policy very largely pursued during the period of our present survey.

The extension of the railway, which was 892 miles, in 1869 when Lawrence's successor Mayo took charge, to 15,245 miles in 1887, and over 42,000 miles since, is an index of the implementation of the programme of material advancement contemplated by Lawrence. The creation of an excellent irrigation system comprising the Agra Canal (1874), the Lower Ganges Canal (1878), the Sirhind Canal (1882), the Lower Chenab Canal (1890-99), etc., was an even more valuable asset to our country where most people subsist on agriculture. The length of the first is 3,700 miles, and that of the last, 2,700 miles. On account of this, the region lying between the Chenab and Ravi rivers, which was an uninhabited waste before, supported in 1901 a population of 800,000. The railway and irrigation exten-

sions have been of very great use in the relief of the famine-stricken people in various parts of the country.

We land ourselves in a very complex and controversial issue in attempting to discuss the real causes of the frequency of famines, especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century. There were devastating famines in the past also. For example, during the Golden Age of Mughal prosperity under Shah Jahan, between 1630-32, there was a very severe famine in the Deccan of which Abdul Hamid Lahori, the Imperial chronicler has given a harrowing description. Commenting upon it, V. A. Smith has quoted Sir Richard Temple's remark that "it is worthwhile to read Mundy's (Peter Mundy was a contemporary European traveller in India, who left accounts, edited by Sir Richard) unimpassioned, matter-of-fact observations on this famine, in order to realize the immensity of the difference in the conditions of life as existing under the rule of the Mogul dynasty when at the height of its glory and those prevailing under the modern British government." Smith makes light of the relief measures adopted by the Emperor (see *ante*, pp.162-3), but draws attention to the Imperial extravagance and grandeur, in order to heighten the contrast. When, at the same time, we are asked to think of "the immensity of the difference ... prevailing under the modern British government", we cannot help recalling to mind the Grand *Darbar* held under Lord Lytton's viceroyalty (to celebrate the Queen's assumption of the Imperial title) when large tracts of Central and Southern India were equally in the grip of a devastating famine (1877). Here is what Mr. W. S. Lilly, a British civilian, wrote about it:

In one year alone—the year when Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, assumed the title of Empress,—5,000,000 of the people of Southern India were starved to death. In the District of Bellary, with which I am personally acquainted,—a region twice the size of Wales—one-fourth of the whole population perished in the famine of 1876-77. I shall never forget my own famine experience; how, as I rode out on horseback, morning after morning, I passed crowds of wandering skeletons, and saw human corpses by the roadside, unburied, uncared for, half devoured by dogs and vultures; and how—still sadder sight—children, 'the joy of the world' as the old Greeks deemed them, had become its ineffable sorrow there, forsaken even by their mothers, their feverish eyes shining from their hollow sockets, their flesh utterly wasted away, only gristle and sinew and cold shivering skin remaining, their heads mere skulls, their puny

frames full of loathsome diseases engendered by the starvation in which they had been conceived and born and nurtured—the sight, the thought of them haunts me still.

Even the pushful and great organiser, Lord Curzon, once exclaimed in a fatalistic way: "To ask any government to prevent the occurrence of famine in a country the meteorological conditions of which are what they are, is to ask us to wrest the keys of the universe from the hands of the Almighty." It is true, as many economists have declared, that Indian agriculture, on which millions subsist, is "a gamble in rains". Nevertheless, it is equally true that, as John Bright declared, "If a country be found possessing a most fertile soil and capable of bearing every variety of production, yet notwithstanding, the people are in a state of extreme destitution and suffering, the chances are there is some fundamental error in the government of that country." Who can deny that this dictum is literally applicable to India? Sir Charles Elliott, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, declared, "Half the agricultural population do not know from one half-year's end to another what it is to have a full meal." Our own Liberal statesman, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who was never known to exaggerate anything, stated, as a responsible member of the Viceroy's Executive Council; "From 60,000,000 to 70,000,000 of the people in India do not know what it is to have their hunger satisfied even once in a year." To the contrary, Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya (c. 302-288 B.C.), had observed: 'Famine has never visited India, and there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food. The inhabitants having abundant means of subsistence, exceed in consequence the ordinary stature, and are distinguished by their proud bearing. They are also well-skilled in the arts, as might be expected of men who inhale a pure air and drink the very finest water.'

To mention only famines of the latter half of the nineteenth century, there were six of them during the first twenty-five years, with a recorded mortality of 5,000,000; and there were eighteen during the last quarter with losses variously estimated between 15,000,000 and 26,000,000. The famine of 1861 affected Agra, Rajputana, the Punjab and Cutch. In 1866, Orissa was so much in its clutches that the Famine Commission stated: "The people, shut up in a narrow province between pathless jungles and an impracticable sea, were in the condition of passengers in a ship without provisions." H. G. Rawlinson writes, "It is estimated that one-fourth of the population of the alluvial

districts died of starvation, and of the epidemic diseases, cholera and malaria, which follow in its wake. The calamity was greatly aggravated by lack of prevision upon the part of the local government, which failed to foresee the onset of the famine, or to take proper measures to cope with it when it occurred." In 1873-4 Bihar and parts of Bengal were hit by a less severe famine; but Sir Richard Temple organised relief with great credit. Between 1876-78, vast areas in Mysore, Madras and Bombay Presidencies, Central and United Provinces and a portion of the Punjab, suffered very severely. But the famine of 1896-7 is believed "to have been the most severe ever known". The area affected by it stretched from Bihar in the east to the Punjab in the west, and included the United Provinces as well as the Central Provinces. Though individual officers worked with devotion, "it does not appear to have been well managed, and the mortality was very heavy". The suffering was rendered more widespread by the simultaneous appearance of bubonic plague in Bombay Presidency. That terrible disease finds first mention in the time of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (about 1615, when Sir Thomas Roe came to India). At first, in 1896, it completely puzzled the medical authorities, and the mortality was very heavy. Injudicious measures employed in the compulsory searching and evacuation of infected premises led to rioting and the murder of two British officers in Poona.

"Perhaps the most important achievement of Indian administration during the period under review," write the authors of *An Advanced History of India*, "was the formation of a definite system of famine relief." It was Lord Lytton who appointed an important Commission, under Sir Richard Strachey, which supplied the basis of the Famine Code of 1883. In addition to suggesting obvious measures such as suspension or remission of taxes, and distribution of food and medicines during the actual duration of a famine, the Commission laid down the very sound principle that relief should also be administered in the shape of providing work for able-bodied men and distributing doles only to the aged and the infirm. A Famine Relief and Insurance Fund was also created, for which an annual contribution was made by the Government of India of Rs 15,600,000. Another Famine Commission, appointed in 1900, stressed the utility of local public works as against official establishments, the creation of agricultural banks, irrigations works, etc. The implementation of this policy enabled Lord Curzon proudly to declare: "Let those who wish to see what the British Government is capable of

doing in India go there, not in prosperous times, but when the country is in the throes of a great famine. They would then see what no government in the world, except our own, is capable of undertaking." He himself landed in India when one such famine was raging in Gujarat (1899-1900). 'He was everywhere and saw everything for himself, with that minute attention to detail which was his characteristic, and was a source of inspiration and courage to everyone who came in contact with him.' He realised that much of the suffering was due to the poor resisting power of the peasants, and did everything in his power to improve it. The Punjab Land Alienation Act, which saved the farmers from the clutches of the money-lenders, and the Co-operative Credit Societies Act, by which rural banks were created in every district, the introduction of artificial manures, iron ploughs, improved methods of stock-breeding, cultivation of long-staple cotton to compete with that grown in Egypt, Japan, and America, etc., were some of the reforms Curzon made towards that end. In July 1900, 6,000,000 people in famine-stricken Gujarat, were in receipt of relief. In the last year of Curzon's regime (1905), the total remissions from taxation amounted to £1,370,000 in a budget of £80,000,000.

India was being transformed steadily though not rapidly. It may be truly said that to change the mind of a nation is to set the direction of its progress. India had chosen the modern way; yet she was an ancient traveller on the road. For such a country the past is not less valuable than the future. Few others can point to so rich and so many monuments and relics of the past as we Indians might with a legitimate pride. It was, therefore, a wise and happy thought that prompted Lord Curzon to pass an Act for the preservation of our Ancient Monuments. Its main objects were "to ensure the proper upkeep and buildings of historical importance; to prevent the unauthorised excavation of ancient sites; and to stop the traffic in antiquities". His choice of Sir John Marshall to be our first Director-General of Archaeology was, indeed, a happy one. If the material basis of our proud past is still visible to our physical eyes, it is due to the creation or reorganisation of the Archaeological Department by one who was the 'Grand Mughal' among our Viceroy's. "In the Company's days," writes H. G. Rawlinson, "the British were complete vandals; even so enlightened a Governor-General as Lord Cavendish Bentinck seriously contemplated the demolition of the Taj Mahal in order to provide lime for a new Government House at Calcutta. Lord Canning started an archaeological service

in 1862, but it was the Cinderella of Government departments, though Lord Lytton showed an enlightened interest in the subject."

To turn from archaeology to more vital matters: the first decennial compilation of vital statistics (census), with linguistic, social and anthropological data, of basic importance to the planning and assessment of all kinds of progress, was undertaken in the time of Lord Ripon (the most popular Viceroy before Mounthatten), in 1881. Ten years later, measures were also taken by Lord Lansdowne, to publish in a compact form the results supplied by the departments of Forestry, Inland Trade, Geology, Veterinary Science, Agricultural Chemistry, etc. From a study of all these we are able to probe deeper into the real effects of British rule, otherwise concealed from our eyes by the impressive facade of reforms and innovations introduced by the zeal of a Bentinck and a Dalhousie. The abolition of *sati*, the introduction of a modern system of education, irrigation works, famine relief, railways, post and telegraph, etc., are indeed invaluable boons conferred on us by the British. But they cannot blind us to the great harm done to us by the British exploitation of India in several other respects.

We have referred, in the note appended to the previous chapter, to the effects of the Industrial Revolution on India. No doubt that Revolution brought immense accession of wealth to England at the cost of the welfare of vast numbers of Englishmen themselves, for a time, immediately. But the evils were soon redressed, so far as Englishmen were concerned, because they had a Government of their own. In India we were crushed by the sinister combination of machine power and political power, which conspired to exploit us, and made us helpless against that exploitation at the same time. This subject of "the economic squeeze" is too vast and controversial to be adequately dealt with here. It must be read in the specialised literature suggested elsewhere. We shall state only a few relevant facts to indicate the nature of the problem.

Before the advent of the British, India was far renowned for her exquisite handicrafts, particularly textiles: calicoes, muslins and shawls. These continued to flourish under the patronage of princes, and the support of the guilds and democratically organised village communities. India-built ships carried these products to China in the East to Europe in the West. According to H. H. Wilson, "the cotton and silk goods of India, up to 1813, could be sold for a profit in the British market, from 50 to 60 per cent.

lower than those fabricated in England." But the completion and consolidation of British conquests soon affected them adversely. In the course of a hundred years, from the close of the eighteenth to the close of the nineteenth century, the number of people engaged in the various handicrafts fell from 25 per cent. to 15 per cent. of the total population. Small as this difference of 10 per cent. may appear, we have to remember that it comprised part of a rapidly growing population; and the diversion bore heavily on agriculture of which the methods were primitive, and the extension of cultivation lagged far behind the need to support the excess. The luckless handicraftsmen driven out of their hereditary occupations only swelled the numbers of the indigent landless agrarian labourers. In England, similar displacements of population from the handicrafts and agriculture were partly re-absorbed by the rapidly expanding machine industries and partly by the ever-increasing Empire and commerce. In India the break-up of kingdoms and their absorption into the British dominion only reduced the avenues of civil and military employment, and added to the burdens on land. The new plantations created by European enterprise, *viz.* those of indigo, tea, coffee and jute, proved a 'delusion and a snare' for the poor displaced workers, on account of their slave-driving tyrannies.

How slow the advance of the new industrialism in India was, could be realised from the fact that, up to the beginning of the present century, the total number of textile operations in the whole country did not exceed 200,000, as against the millions who had been displaced. The first textile mill was started in Bombay about 1851 by the Bombay Spinning and Weaving Company; but it did not get into stride until 1854. By 1861, about a dozen more had sprung up. But the cotton boom caused by the American Civil War of 1859-65 ruined the Indian mill as well as handloom industries by its effect on the price of cotton. The close of the Civil War resulted in a sudden collapse of the Indian equivalent of the "South Sea Bubble": commercial firms fell like ninepins, and even the Bank of Bombay went into liquidation. The cotton industry did not recover from that shock until about 1874-5. By 1880 it got on its legs again. Mr. Justice Ranade then declared: "What appear to me to be good grounds for the hope I entertain, that India has now fairly entered upon the path which if pursued in the same spirit which has animated its capitalists hitherto, cannot fail to work out its industrial salvation." Labour in India has always been cheap; but the nascent Indian industry suffered on account of the

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political domination of England. Our Imperial masters, while they systematically killed our indigenous handicrafts for the protection of their own manufactures, prevented our mill industry from growing up by placing embargoes upon the export of machinery from England and imposing invidious tariffs in India. "The cost of production in India was so low," observes Mr. M. N. Roy in his *India in Transition* (p.100), "that even the English machine industry had to be protected in its early days against Indian imports by the enormous duty of 80 per cent. *ad valorem*."

Mr. Rushbrook Williams has tried to combat the above apparently harsh criticism, and of writers like Sir William Digby and R. C. Dutt, by suggesting the contrary; yet he is obliged to admit that "the jealousy displayed by the Lancashire manufacturers towards the end of the nineteenth century" was largely responsible for such an impression being created. "This jealousy," he writes, "lamentably affected British policy, so that much justifiable heart-burning was caused to Indians." Until 1868, the Indian tariff, for purely revenue purposes, levied an *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. on all imports, and 3 per cent. on a number of exports. Sir John Lawrence reduced the import duties to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and Lord Northbrook further lowered them to 5 per cent. Lord Lytton, in the teeth of his Council and the opposition of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, insisted on the total abolition of the 5 per cent. duty on the import of coarse cotton goods, and "gave the unfortunate impression that India's fiscal policy was dictated from Whitehall in the interests of Manchester" (Rawlinson). When financial difficulties arose during the viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne and Lord Elgin, Indian Mints were closed to the unrestricted coinage of silver, the exchange ratio was fixed at 15 rupees for a sovereign, and the Indian Government decided to reimpose the 5 per cent. import duty, in 1894. But this last legitimate step, in the interests of revenue during a period of financial embarrassment, was reversed by the Home Government at the dictation of the Lancashire manufacturers. "Most unfortunately," writes Rushbrook Williams, "the measures taken by Government to restore financial equilibrium were of a character calculated to reinforce the suspicion... that the financial well-being of their country was being subordinated to the interests of England... The additional burden of taxation required to meet the home charges, combined with the tariff policy of the authorities, served to convince many Indians that whenever the interests of Great Britain and of India came into conflict, the

latter would be sacrificed to the former. This conviction was important; for it strengthened the element of racial bitterness which was already present, by implication, in discussions of the Indian National Congress."

We shall deal with the genesis of the Indian National Congress in the last chapter. It will then be seen that the "implication" of "racial bitterness" was far from being shared by the Congress prior to the Curzonian regime. If anywhere present, since the Great Rising of 1857, it was lingering in the hearts of Englishmen, as was eminently demonstrated by the Ilbert Bill agitation in 1883-4 that hounded India's most popular Viceroy, Lord Ripon, out of the country. As Meredith Townshend remarked, in his *Asia and Europe* (p.108), Ripon's "journey from Simla to Bombay was a triumphal march such as India had never witnessed—a long procession in which seventy millions of Indians sang hosanna to their friend. Lord Ripon had done nothing, had taken off no tax, had removed no burden, had not altered the mode of government one hair's breadth. He was only supposed to be for Indians and against Europeans, and that sufficed to bring every Indian in a fervour of friendship to his side." Mr. Townshend has, however, put the central fact—of the Indian sentiment of appreciation of Ripon's genuine goodwill towards Indians—in a rather melodramatic form: Ripon did do (or attempt) much; he tried to pour new wine into old bottles, but the bottles gave way!

2. From Calcutta to Delhi

A dozen Viceroys ruled from Calcutta during the fifty-four years that followed the Great Rising of 1857. The capital of British India was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi with the grand celebration of the *Darbar* at Delhi, on 12th December 1911, during the viceroyalty of the thirteenth. Though the British Queen had been proclaimed Empress of India in 1877, no British sovereign had set foot on Indian soil before King George V. His coronation at the ancient capital of India—particularly that of the Mughals—was significant from more than the merely spectacular point of view. It marked the end of a long epoch—that which had commenced with Warren Hastings in 1773—and proved the harbinger of a new era. An eye-witness of the scene enthusiastically declared: "That incomparable moment when the Monarchs seated themselves upon their high thrones beneath a shining golden dome, in the midst of a hundred thousand of their acclaiming subjects, will assuredly remain in the minds of those present as the most vivid memory of their lives. It was a majestic and moving

rite, fraught with deep emotion, compelling thought into unwonted channels. The greetings of the multitude set the final seal upon the validity of the British Empire in the East." But that observer missed the real emotions of the New India which was fast emerging, the India that was evolving a Mahatma Gandhi. If he were alive today, he would perhaps echo—of course with a difference in content and implications—the famous words of Burke: "Oh! what a revolution! and what a heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall!" At any rate the lament could, with Thucydidean veracity, be put into the mouth of Mr. Winston Churchill. The thoughts certainly did not run into "unwonted channels". The "final seal upon the validity of the British Empire" was placed, not by the great eclat and fanfare or Mughal grandeur of the *Darbar*, but by other forces and in a different sense. The most self-assured of the Viceroys, Lord Curzon, had, likewise, optimistically declared in his last public utterance in India: "Let no man admit that craven fear that those who have won India cannot hold it... This is not my forecast of its future. To me the message is carved in granite, it is hewn out of the rock of doom—that our work is righteous and that it shall endure." How that prophecy fulfilled itself, we shall witness later. Curzon wrote, many years afterwards, that over the Viceregal throne there hung "not only a canopy of brodered gold but a mist of human tears". We might parody that statement with truth and say, "beneath the brodered canopy of British rule were concealed clouds of human tears welling from other than Viceregal eyes". Not all our administrators have striven to wipe those tears.

Material benefits, efficient and even good government, are no acceptable substitutes for self-government. Most of the British Viceroys undoubtedly strove to give us the former, but few realised the wisdom, need or justice of conceding the latter. India, unlike some of the colonies, was never considered as a 'mill-stone' round the neck of England; she was rather regarded as a 'milch cow' to be fed—not in the scientific but the primitive style—for the tribute of 'milk' she yielded. As Major Wingate (who was Revenue Commissioner for Bombay in 1859) put it, "Not only is it a fact that India has been acquired without the expenditure of a single shilling on the part of this country (Britain), but it is actually a fact that India has regularly paid to Great Britain a heavy tribute... Its effect is, of course, to impoverish the one country and to enrich the other... The exaction of a tribute from India, as a conquered country, would sound harsh and tyrannical in

English ears; so the real nature of the Indian contribution has been carefully concealed from the British public under the less offensive appellation of 'Home Charges' on the Indian Government." We shall presently see how even some of the material boons (such as railways) cost us dear, apart from the Imperial military expeditions (to Burma and China in the East to Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, and even Abyssinia in the West). Yet the policy was: "everything for the people of India, but nothing by the people of India."

Lord Curzon proudly claimed that the Almighty had placed the Englishman's hands "on the greatest of His ploughs, in whose furrow the nations of the future are germinating and taking shape, to drive the blade a little forward in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice or happiness or prosperity, a sense of manliness or moral dignity, a spring of patriotism, a dawn of intellectual enlightenment or a stirring of duty where it did not exist before—that is enough, that is the Englishman's justification in India". Very impressive as the peroration of a viceregal farewell address, it covered, as a matter of fact, under its rhetoric, realities to which the speaker was himself blind. The more correct key-note of Curzon's administration was sounded by him in another statement of his: "I earnestly hope," he said, "that the Viceroy of India may never cease to be the head of the Government of India in the fullest sense of the word. It is not one man rule, which may or may not be a good thing—that depends on the man. But it is one man supervision, which is the best form of Government, presuming the man is competent. The alternative in India is a bureaucracy, which is the most mechanised and lifeless of all forms of administration."

We have already pointed out how the Governor-General's power over the entire administrative system in India steadily increased ever since the time of Dalhousie. Curzon as Viceroy was so powerful that even so sober-minded a politician as G. K. Gokhale once compared him to Aurangzeb. Like Morley at the India Office, he left no initiative to any one else. He worked with daemonic energy and insisted on all others doing likewise. He kept up a personal correspondence with the Governors, Lt.-Governors, and Residents at the courts of Princes, and so on, and "his touch was felt in the most distant corners of the territory over which he held sway". He felt a religious fervour that made him say: "If I felt that we were not working for the good of India in obedience to a higher law and a nobler aim, then I would see the link that holds England and India

together severed without a sigh. But it is because I believe in the future of this country and the capacity of our own race to guide it to goals that it has never hitherto attained, that I keep courage and press forward." His invaluable work for the famine-stricken and the peasants has been referred to before. "The peasant," he truly said, "has been the background of every policy for which I have been responsible, of every surplus of which I have had the disposition." But what of the educated and politically awakened classes? He frankly distrusted them. "More places on this or that Council for a few active or eloquent men," he unequivocally declared, "will not benefit the raiyats." Nay, he went farther, and stated: "That I have not offered political concessions is because I did not regard it as wisdom or statesmanship in the interests of India to do so." His educational policy, which will be commented upon later, was governed by the same attitude, called by his biographer Ronaldshay, "a cardinal article of his belief". His most unpopular act—the Partition of Bengal—was equally the outcome of a reckless disregard of educated public opinion in India. Ronaldshay writes: "Thus there was fashioned in Lord Curzon's mind an image of India very different from that which was being built up in the minds of the apostles of the new Nationalism. And it was wholly in keeping with his almost Patriarchal conception of the relations between himself and the India of his vision, that he should have come to believe that his own judgments of what was in her interests were the judgments of the Indian people." Curzon, with all his great virtues as an administrator, had as little capacity as Marie Antoinette to know the real mind and aspirations of the people over whom he was called upon to rule and was not quicker than Louis XVI in appreciating the urgencies of the national situation. In this respect, he had no more imagination than "the most mechanised and lifeless bureaucracy" over which he presided and which he did more than anyone else to make ruthlessly efficient.

"India is governed," said Lord Ripon, "by a Bureaucracy which, though I sincerely believe it to be the best that the world has ever seen, has still the faults and the dangers which belong to every institution of that kind; among these faults is conspicuously a jealousy of allowing non-officials to interfere in any way whatever with any portion, however restricted, of the administration of the country." The systematic exclusion of Indians from all positions of responsibility, as illustrated by us earlier in respect of the higher Civil Services, led to a sense of frustration which was the very antithesis of "a sense of manliness or moral

dignity" spoken of by Curzon. As Gokhale said with great force, "The question of the wider employment of Indians in the higher branches of the Public Service of their own country is one which is intimately bound up, not only with the cause of economic administration, but also with the political elevation of the people of India. There is no other country in the world where young men of ability and education find themselves so completely shut out from all hope of ever participating in the higher responsibilities of office. Everywhere else the army and the navy offer careers to aspiring youths which draw forth from them the best efforts of which they are capable. These services, for us in this country, practically do not exist. The great Civil Service, which is entrusted with the task of general administration, is also very nearly a monopoly of Englishmen. . . But our exclusion from high office does not end here. In all the special departments, or Minor Services, as they are called, our position is even worse." On another occasion, and in a more famous passage, he declared:

The financial loss entailed by this practical monopoly by Europeans of the higher branches of the Services in India is not represented by salaries only. There are, besides, heavy pension and furlough charges, more than 3½ million sterling being paid to Europeans in England for the purpose in 1890. The excessive costliness of the foreign agency is not, however, its only evil. There is a moral evil which, if anything, is even greater. A kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the present system. We must live all the days of our life in an atmosphere of inferiority, and the tallest of us must bend, in order that the exigencies of the existing system may be satisfied. The upward impulse, if I may use such an expression, which every schoolboy at Eton or Harrow may feel, that he may one day be a Gladstone, a Nelson, or a Wellington, and which may draw forth all the best efforts of which he is capable, is denied to us. The full height to which our manhood is capable of rising can never be reached by us under the present system. The moral elevation which every self-governing people feels cannot be felt by us. Our administrative and military talents must gradually disappear, owing to sheer disuse, till at last our lot, as hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country, is stereotyped.

The only Viceroy who correctly understood the situation and was genuinely desirous of remedying it was Lord Ripon. The contrast between him and Curzon was epigrammatically brought out by the *New India* of 20th August

together severed without a sigh. But it is because I believe in the future of this country and the capacity of our own race to guide it to goals that it has never hitherto attained, that I keep courage and press forward." His invaluable work for the famine-stricken and the peasants has been referred to before. "The peasant," he truly said, "has been the background of every policy for which I have been responsible, of every surplus of which I have had the disposition." But what of the educated and politically awakened classes? He frankly distrusted them. "More places on this or that Council for a few active or eloquent men," he unequivocally declared, "will not benefit the raiyats." Nay, he went farther, and stated: "That I have not offered political concessions is because I did not regard it as wisdom or statesmanship in the interests of India to do so." His educational policy, which will be commented upon later, was governed by the same attitude, called by his biographer Ronaldshay, "a cardinal article of his belief". His most unpopular act—the Partition of Bengal—was equally the outcome of a reckless disregard of educated public opinion in India. Ronaldshay writes: "Thus there was fashioned in Lord Curzon's mind an image of India very different from that which was being built up in the minds of the apostles of the new Nationalism. And it was wholly in keeping with his almost Patriarchal conception of the relations between himself and the India of his vision, that he should have come to believe that his own judgments of what was in her interests were the judgments of the Indian people." Curzon, with all his great virtues as an administrator, had as little capacity as Marie Antoinette to know the real mind and aspirations of the people over whom he was called upon to rule and was not quicker than Louis XVI in appreciating the urgencies of the national situation. In this respect, he had no more imagination than "the most mechanised and lifeless bureaucracy" over which he presided and which he did more than anyone else to make ruthlessly efficient.

"India is governed," said Lord Ripon, "by a Bureaucracy which, though I sincerely believe it to be the best that the world has ever seen, has still the faults and the dangers which belong to every institution of that kind; among these faults is conspicuously a jealousy of allowing non-officials to interfere in any way whatever with any portion, however restricted, of the administration of the country." The systematic exclusion of Indians from all positions of responsibility, as illustrated by us earlier in respect of the higher Civil Services, led to a sense of frustration which was the very antithesis of "a sense of manliness or moral

dignity" spoken of by Curzon. As Gokhale said with great force, "The question of the wider employment of Indians in the higher branches of the Public Service of their own country is one which is intimately bound up, not only with the cause of economic administration, but also with the political elevation of the people of India. There is no other country in the world where young men of ability and education find themselves so completely shut out from all hope of ever participating in the higher responsibilities of office. Everywhere else the army and the navy offer careers to aspiring youths which draw forth from them the best efforts of which they are capable. These services, for us in this country, practically do not exist. The great Civil Service, which is entrusted with the task of general administration, is also very nearly a monopoly of Englishmen. . . But our exclusion from high office does not end here. In all the special departments, or Minor Services, as they are called, our position is even worse." On another occasion, and in a more famous passage, he declared:

The financial loss entailed by this practical monopoly by Europeans of the higher branches of the Services in India is not represented by salaries only. There are, besides, heavy pension and furlough charges, more than 3½ million sterling being paid to Europeans in England for the purpose in 1890. The excessive costliness of the foreign agency is not, however, its only evil. There is a moral evil which, if anything, is even greater. A kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the present system. We must live all the days of our life in an atmosphere of inferiority, and the tallest of us must bend, in order that the exigencies of the existing system may be satisfied. The upward impulse, if I may use such an expression, which every schoolboy at Eton or Harrow may feel, that he may one day be a Gladstone, a Nelson, or a Wellington, and which may draw forth all the best efforts of which he is capable, is denied to us. The full height to which our manhood is capable of rising can never be reached by us under the present system. The moral elevation which every self-governing people feels cannot be felt by us. Our administrative and military talents must gradually disappear, owing to sheer disuse, till at last our lot, as hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country, is stereotyped.

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1903: "Lord Ripon's ideal," it wrote, "was to secure, by slow degrees, autonomy for the *Indian people*. Lord Curzon's is to secure it for the *Indian Government*." With an unerring insight, Ripon arrived at a statesmanlike analysis and decision. There are always two policies lying before the choice of the Government of India: "The one is the policy of those who have established a free Press, who have promoted education, who have admitted natives, more and more largely to the public service in various forms, and who have favoured the extension of self-government; the other is, that of those who hate the freedom of the Press, who dread the progress of education, and who watch with jealousy and alarm everything which tends, in however limited a degree, to give the Natives of India a larger share in the management of their own affairs. Between these two policies we must choose; the one means progress, the other means repression. Lord Lytton chose the latter. I have chosen the former, and I am content to rest my vindication upon a comparison of the results." "To move too fast," he recognised, "is dangerous, but to lag behind is more dangerous still." His reading of the spirit of the times was remarkable: "No one who watches the signs of the times in this country with even moderate care," he wrote to the Secretary of State in 1882, "can doubt that we have entered upon a period of change: the spread of education, the existing and increasing influence of a free Press, the substitution of legal for discretionary administration, the progress of railways, telegraphs, etc., the easier communication with Europe, and the more ready influx of European ideas, are now beginning to produce a marked effect upon the people; new ideas are springing up; new aspirations are being called forth; the power of public opinion is growing and strengthening from day to day; and a movement has begun which will advance with greater rapidity and force every year. Such a condition of affairs is one in which the task of government, and especially practically despotic government, is beset with difficulties of no light kind, . . . and the problem is how to deal with this new-born spirit of progress, raw and superficial as in many respects it is, so as to direct it into a right course, and to derive from it all the benefits which its development is capable of ultimately conferring upon the country, and at the same time to prevent it from becoming, through blind indifference or stupid repression, a source of serious political danger."

The courage and honesty with which Ripon undertook the task of essential reforms, proved that his words were not merely a manifesto of pious intentions. This fact is all the

more to be appreciated because of the reactionary atmosphere in which Ripon found himself. This may be illustrated by reference to two sample opinions of his contemporaries. In a speech in London, Seton Kerr, formerly Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, declared that the Ilbert Bill outraged "the cherished conviction which was shared by every Englishman in India from the highest to the lowest, by the planter's assistant in his lowly bungalow and by the editor in the full light of the Presidency town—from those to the Chief Commissioner in charge of an important province and to the Viceroy on his throne—the conviction in every man that he belongs to a race whom God has destined to govern and subdue." Lord Roberts, too, thought that "it is this consciousness of the inherent superiority of the European which has won for us India. However well educated and clever a native may be, and however brave he may have proved himself, I believe that no rank which we can bestow upon him would cause him to be considered as an equal by the British officer". This, indeed, resulted in the creation of a new caste in India—that of "White Brahmans"—"with the usual features of the caste system: endogamy, commensality, and mutual control by members"! In 1878 it reduced the maximum age for I.C.S. candidates competing in England ("the age of consent") from 21 to 19. The effect was that, in 1880, there were only two Indians among the competitors, as against seven in 1870. Even so late as in 1923, only 88 posts were listed, instead of the 116 to which the Provincial Civil Service was entitled! No wonder that, in 1915, only 5 per cent. of the Civil Servants were Indians. In the army, too, conditions were no better; in fact they were worse. 'Until the War no Indian soldier in British India could rise higher than the Viceroy's commission. He could become a Risaldar or Subadar, but his position was scarcely above that of a glorified N.C.O., and he was junior to the youngest subaltern.' "The desire for efficiency, combined with certain prejudices," write Thompson and Garratt, "made the Indian tax-payer provide for a force which was able to take a prominent part in the Great War, but which was very far from being a national army suitable for an autonomous Government."

The policy behind all this was dictated not merely by the natural desire to find as many jobs for Englishmen as possible, but by the fear and distrust of the Indian engendered by the events of 1857. "The question at issue," confessed Lord Curzon, "is rather not what is the maximum number of offices that can safely be given to Indians, but what is the minimum that must of necessity be reserved

for Europeans." Verily, as the authors quoted above have stated: "The British in India were in the position of an army fighting a rear-guard action instead of giving the country a lead towards some definite objective."

Reforms they did introduce. But many of them were counter balanced by a loss or defect that deprived us of their fullest benefit. It was like what Macaulay said of Byron: "He had an attractive countenance, but he was lame in one leg; he was born rich, but his inheritance was an encumbered estate," and so on! Take the typical case of railways, for example. They were an unquestionable boon; but the system that guaranteed profits to the British companies involved heavy losses for our Government. While losses were to be made good entirely from the Indian revenues (and gains upto 5 per cent. guaranteed for twenty-five years), profits above 5 per cent. were to be shared—half and half—between the companies and the Government. They were expensively built and badly supervised by inexperienced Government officials. "Before they were finished," writes Dodwell, "these guaranteed lines had cost £17,000 a mile, or nearly double the original estimate. Consequently, it was a long time before they began to earn their guaranteed rate of interest; and even then Government found that the half-yearly division of surplus profits involved a bad bargain, because in the busy six months of the year, when the railways made more than their 5 per cent., Government only obtained half the surplus, and in the slack six months, when there was always a deficit, they had to bear the whole of the deficiency; so that, even in years when the railways really did earn a surplus on the whole, Government had to pay more than they received under the agreements. By 1869 the charges amounted under this system to a million and a half sterling a year." It was, indeed, a case of "heads I win, tails you lose!" for the railway companies.

Another instance of invidious benefits is provided by the salt and income taxes. The former was levied mostly upon the poor (for their number is larger), while the latter affects only the richer classes. Since Government held the monopoly of the salt trade, the enormous 'Chinese Wall' of customs barriers—stretching over a distance of 2,300 miles, and guarded by nearly 13,000 men—was removed, in 1878, when the Sambhar Lake and all other sources in Rajputana were acquired. Measures were also taken to equalise the salt duty throughout India. In 1882 a uniform rate of Rs. 2 a maund was established in all provinces, which was later varied. Between 1903 and 1907, it was halved. In the budget of 1913-14 it was reduced from Rs. 2½ to

Re. 1 per maund of 82 lbs. Nevertheless, the gross revenue from salt amounted to £3,445, while that from income-tax was only £1,893. In 1865 the income-tax had been altogether dropped. Though restored in 1869, Lord Northbrook again removed it in 1875, leaving the salt-tax intact. "His opposition to the former impost," according to Rushbrook Williams, "was probably a result of the general free-trade dislike of direct taxation; but exposed him to the criticism that he was relieving the rich at the expense of the poor." The burden on the poor was symbolic rather than real; nevertheless it imparted a savour to the nationalist criticism which the poor man could feel with every morsel of his scanty food. Laing, a financial expert whose views influenced the Indian policy for many years, was of the opinion that "once men were free, the State should not interfere any further between the rich and the poor". He "insisted that taxation should not be used to alter the existing social order". "I have no sympathy with the socialist legislation," he blatantly declared, "which would place taxation exclusively on the rich. On the contrary, I believe the poor, as well as the rich, and often even more than the rich, are interested in the support of the State and the maintenance of social order." *Ergo*, it was not a far cry to the policy of robbing the Indian Peter to pay the British Paul: to feed Lancashire at the expense of Bombay in the matter of cotton duties.

In 1894, when Lord Elgin succeeded Lord Lansdowne, it was proposed to reimpose the 5 per cent. duty on all imports to meet the financial stringency created by the worldwide decline in the price of silver and the consequent depreciation of the Indian rupee. But acting on instructions from home, the Government of India proceeded to exempt cotton goods from the general import rate. "There is no reasonable doubt," writes Rushbrook Williams, "that the political pressure exercised upon the Home Government by the Lancashire cotton interests was responsible for this lamentable step. India lost the revenue to which she was justly entitled; and Manchester goods secured an indefensible advantage over Indian products. But as the financial difficulties of the Government of India continued, it was found impossible for long to exempt cotton goods from the general tariff. So strong, however, was the feeling in England on behalf of free trade, and so powerful the Lancashire interests, that the Government of India were actually forced by the Home Government to offset the inconsiderable protection which the 5 per cent. import duty on Manchester goods would have given to the Indian mills, by imposing a countervailing excise duty calculated

at the same figure." The just resentment caused by this in India was not proportionately reduced by the scaling down of the two rates from 5 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in 1896.

The new changes, on the whole, spelt ruin for the masses for whose welfare the Viceroy seemed to be specially solicitous. The decline of the handicrafts, as we noted, drove the craftsmen to the already overburdened land. There they had to eke out a precarious living as wage-earners. Those wages always fluctuated. Formerly Indian agriculture was conditioned only by the rains. Now a new element entered its vicissitudes. There was a demand for 'cash crops' (e.g. cotton). It was very tempting to go in for them, because the Government assessment was always collected in cash. When the American Civil War created an extraordinary demand for Indian cotton in England, there was a boom of which we have spoken. It quadrupled the price of cotton; put up wages; and hit the Indian textiles (both mill and handloom). But it brought in glittering silver, which the peasants converted into ornaments or expended in other equally unproductive ways: marriage ceremonials, funeral rites, etc. When the reaction set in with the closing of the American war, prices and wages fell, banks and business concerns collapsed pell-mell and the 'cash croppers' came to grief. They got into the inextricable clutches of the ubiquitous money-lenders.

By 1880 the unequal fight between the peasant proprietor and the money-lender had ended in a crushing victory for the latter, and as someone said, apropos of the wealth that was pouring into the country, the money-lender got the oyster, while the Government and the cultivator each got a shell. For the next thirty years the money-lender was at his zenith, and multiplied and prospered exceedingly, to such good effect that the number of bankers and money-lenders (and their dependents) increased from 53,263 in 1868 to 193,890 in 1911.

In 1880 the Famine Commission reported that "one-third of the land-holding classes are deeply and inextricably in debt, and that at least an equal proportion are in debt, though not beyond the power of recovering themselves". The Commission, indeed, proposed several remedies to give the ryots security, protection against distraint, etc., but the fundamental question remained unanswered. It was, as Lord Ripon feelingly formulated it: "If with all our knowledge and all our science we cannot preserve them from dying of starvation by hundreds of thousands every few years, how can we justify our domination over them?... Is it a satisfactory answer to say that we are

making our protective railways at the rate of £500,000 a year, and that, after some three or four more famines have passed by, we hope to have given our people reasonable security against their future recurrence?" His panacea was self-government. "Among the political objects attainable in India," he said, "I see at present none higher."

The beginnings of this policy of entrusting the tasks of government more and more to Indians had been made before Ripon. His predecessor, Lytton, whatever his other faults or blunders of foreign policy, showed a real grasp of the necessities of the internal administration when he inveighed against "the fundamental political mistake of able and experienced Indian (i.e. British) officials...that we can hold India securely by what they call good government; that is to say, by improving the condition of the ryot, strictly administering justice, spending immense sums on irrigation works, etc." His institution of the Statutory Civil Service was intended to give uncovenanted servants opportunities to exercise responsibilities which were till then the preserve of the Covenanted Civil Servants alone. Larger cities and municipalities were worked by nominated commissioners under official chairmen; in rural areas there were district boards since 1865. Lord Mayo and Northbrook (1873) passed a series of Acts empowering Local Governments to appoint members of Municipal Committees by election. Lord Ripon extended the system by establishing 'taluka' or 'tahsil' boards as subdivisions of the district boards; and by substituting 'outside control for inside interference,' as he put it. That is, elected chairmen were to take the place of the ex-officio (Collector) Presidents. His purpose was educative. Explaining his Resolution of 18th May, 1882, on the subject, Ripon observed:

What I want to secure by the extension of Local Self-Government is not a representation of the people of an European Democratic type, but the gradual training of the best, most intelligent, and most influential men in the community to take an interest and an active part in the management of their local affairs... If the Boards are to be of any use for the purpose of training the natives to manage their own affairs, they must not be overshadowed by the constant presence of the *Burra Sahib* (or 'big swell') of the district; they must be left gradually more and more to run alone, although watched from without by the Executive Authorities and checked if they run out of the right course... Again, I should like you to understand that what I am trying to do is

not to impose an English system on India, but to revive and extend the indigenous system of the country. That indigenous system we have done a great deal to destroy, but the remnants of it exist to a greater or less extent in most parts of the country, and it is upon those remnants that I hope to build up the edifice of Local Self-government; that is why I prefer, as the Resolution indicates, small areas to large, as the unit of my arrangements; in small areas it will be more easy to make full use of what remains of the Village system, and to let the superstructure of Local Government rise upon that ancient foundation.

This was in refreshing contrast to the prevailing ideas of government among Anglo-Indian administrators. For example, Ashburner, a member of the Council of Sir James Fergusson (Governor of Bombay), who 'when he was a District Officer told the Ryots what crops they were to grow on their land, and would not let them grow anything else, and firmly believed that this was the only way of carrying on Government in this country'. Fergusson himself prohibited the use of Macaulay's essays on Clive and Warren Hastings as textbooks in the Bombay "schools", lest they should prove subversive of loyalty. His Government characterised Ripon's Resolution on Self-government as a "very radical measure" and placed on record that "measures so extensive are premature".

It was against such a background that Ripon ventured to enact his Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill generally known as the 'Ilbert Bill'. In this, together with several other reforms, it was felt that Ripon had "bit off more than he could chew". But "in truth," says his biographer, "the Bill was far less a part of Ripon's reforming policy than a normal outcome of certain necessities—by no means urgent—of the administrative evolution of India." The crux of the problem was thus stated in his dispatch to Hartington (Secretary of State), dated 23rd September, 1882: "In the Presidency towns, by a strange anomaly, natives (in the I.C.S.) are allowed to exercise over Europeans a jurisdiction which they are debarred outside the limits of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. It is clear that an invidious distinction of this kind between members of the same service cannot be maintained. . . One of the leading members of the Council, Maharajah Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, was anxious to bring the subject forward and move amendments in the Bill with a view to giving Native Civil Servants jurisdiction over Europeans." Sir Ashley Eden, Lt.-Governor of Bengal, urged with great clarity and cogency: "Now that native covenanted civilians

may shortly be expected to hold the office of district magistrate or sessions judge, it is also, as a matter of administrative convenience, desirable that they should have the power to try all classes of persons brought before them. Moreover, if this power is not conferred upon native members of the Civil Service, the anomaly may be presented of a European joint magistrate, who is subordinate to a native district magistrate or sessions judge, being empowered to try cases which his immediate superior cannot try. Native Presidency magistrates within the Presidency towns exercise the same jurisdiction over Europeans that they do over natives, and there seems to be no sufficient reason why covenanted native civilians, with the position and training of district magistrate or sessions judge, should not exercise the same jurisdiction over Europeans as is exercised by other members of the service." But this was too much for the "White Brahmans" of the bureaucratic order. The agitation against the appointment of Mr. Mitter as Acting Chief Justice of Bengal, vice Sir P. Garth going on furlough, showed the direction of the wind. Garth himself threatened to cancel his furlough "if Mitter was to sit for him".

Opposition to the Bill started with the English barristers in the Calcutta Bar Library. They made use of the newspaper *Englishman*, and roused the planters and settlers up-country to join in the agitation. 'Once set off it acquired force by moving, and its climax was reached on 28th February at the Town Hall.' The Bill was regarded as an attempt to "put the native on the Gaddi", whereas 'Britannicus' in the *Englishman* thought "the only people who have any right to India are the British: the so-called Indians have no right whatever"! Meredith Townshend, whom we quoted earlier, once editor of the *Friend of India*, wrote:

Would you like to live in a country where at any moment your wife would be liable to be sentenced on a false charge of slapping an Ayah to three days' imprisonment, the Magistrate being a copper-coloured Pagan who probably worships the Linga, and certainly exults in any opportunity of showing that he can insult white persons with impunity?

Ripon himself enumerated the *Englishman's* grievances in these terms: "On looking about for support they found one portion of the community which disliked a Native Chief Justice, another which disliked Native Civilians, another which disliked the local S.G. scheme, and the Eurasians who disliked the Rurki Bill (which confined the admission to the Engineering College to Indians). These disconnected atoms all flew together, while those who had interest in

any of these questions, at least were sensitive on anything affecting European women." Dwelling on the effects, he wrote to Kimberley, "Englishmen in India had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing since the days when they threatened to drown Macaulay in the Hoogly."

Ripon's biographer, Mr. Lucian Wolf, laid his finger on the most vital point at issue when he wrote: "The Bill, unimportant in itself, stood for the central principle of liberal policy in India—the famous announcement of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 that: 'It is Our will that, so far as may be, Our subjects of whatever race or creed will be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge'; and to have to withdraw it would have been to confess to the Indian peoples that this solemn promise could not be fulfilled." Yet so reasonable a measure as the proposed Ilbert Bill caused an immediate uproar, "one of those curious outbursts of racial antipathy and the primitive herd instinct (as Thompson and Garratt have described it) which are apt to afflict an expatriated community in an unsuitable climate. The tragedy of this agitation was that it succeeded, and that, after the Viceroy had been boycotted and insulted, a compromise was reached by which a European arraigned before a District Judge could claim to be tried by a jury of which half were Europeans." Ripon's speech, in the Legislative Council, on 7th January 1884, puts in a nutshell the exact nature of the "Concordat":

The Government undertook—

To agree in Select Committee on the basis of the modifications approved in the Secretary of State's despatch to the right being given to European British subjects, when brought for trial before a District Magistrate or Sessions Judge, to claim trial by jury such as is provided for by Section 451 of the Criminal Procedure Code, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) No distinction to be made between European and Native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges.
- (2) Powers of District Magistrates under Section 446 of the Code to be extended to imprisonment for six months or fine of two thousand rupees.

There was in this undertaking no sacrifice whatever of the principle of the Bill. It distinctly lays down as a condition of the acceptance by the Government of such a proposal in Select Committee, and the extended right to a jury trial, that no distinction should be made between European and Native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges. Both under the arrangement will be placed in

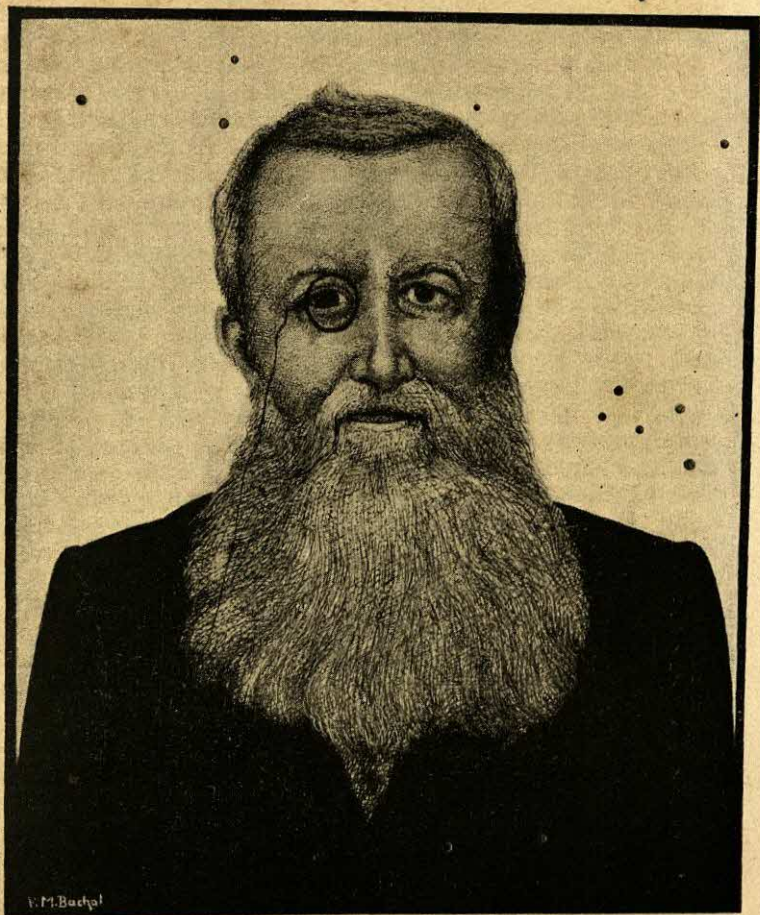
all respects on the same footing. All judicial disqualifications of Native Magistrates and Judges of those grades will be removed. Europeans will be liable to appear equally in their courts, and will be dealt with by them precisely in the same manner. The principle of the Bill will thus be entirely maintained. This arrangement also gives no sanction to the theory to which I have already referred, that an Englishman possesses everywhere an inalienable right to be tried only before a magistrate of his own race, a right which, as my honourable friend Mr. Ilbert explained in his speech, is not recognized in other dominions of the British Crown—in Ceylon or in China, for instance—and which no Government, since the passing of the Act of 1833, which distinctly contravenes any such claim, has ever been known to admit. But it was an arrangement which, as it seems to me, ought to be satisfactory to Englishmen in India, for it gives them in all serious cases a judicial security to which they are accustomed at home, which is peculiarly English in its character, and upon which they have been brought up to set a very high value.

Ripon agreed to this compromise, as he confessed to Kimberley, "to avoid the risk of a street row in Calcutta. Such things in India can never be light matters". As a matter of fact, adds his biographer, the European police force in Calcutta at the time was only between 60 and 70 strong, and, "if the Europeans had insisted on a row, it might have been necessary to use European troops to quell it". *Punch* came out with a significant cartoon on the whole affair, on 15th December 1883, with the caption "The Anglo-Indian Mutiny: a bad example for the elephant". It represented a party of Anglo-Indians (in the *howdah*) threatening and molesting Ripon who was seated on an elephant (representing India). "No educated Indian," write Thompson and Garratt, "has ever forgotten the lesson of the Ilbert Bill... especially the aloof and powerful British Government (being) deflected from its purpose by newspaper abuse and an exhibition of bad manners. In later days Indian nationalism was to acquire some of its technique from the suffrage movement in England, and more from Irish Home Rulers (Ripon was an Irishman), but it was the successful agitation against the Ilbert Bill which decided the general lines upon which the Indian politician was to run his campaigns. It is significant that the two years which followed this agitation saw the foundation of the Indian National Congress and the European Association." Indeed, 'the good that men do is oft interred with their bones; the evil lives after them'. But the insinuation does scant justice to the

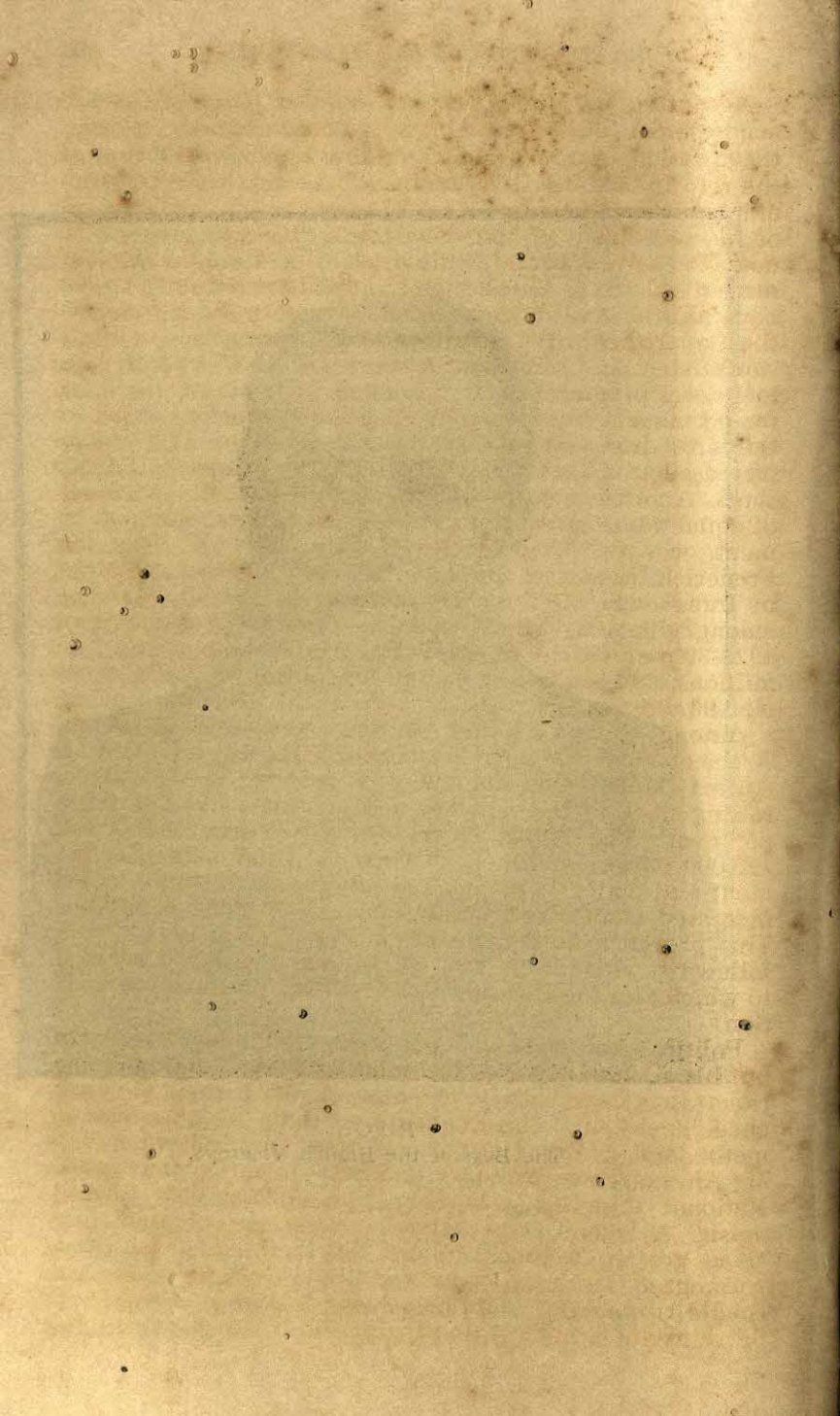
Indian National Congress whose methods of legitimate and decent agitation for the attainment of national freedom cannot be compared without blasphemy with the Anglo-Indian "row" against the Ilbert Bill, in defence of racial exclusivism.

We cannot close this review of Ripon's contribution to the making of modern India without referring to two more of his salutary reforms: viz., the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act, and measures facilitating Indian education. The former was promulgated by Lytton in the exigencies of the Afghan War. It was intended as a security against sedition. Under its provisions newspapers could be asked to deposit securities which might be forfeited, and Government could seize the plant of a newspaper which had not deposited security. The objections against it were chiefly two-fold: (i) that it was invidious to apply the provisions to Vernacular papers only, and not to papers published in English; (ii) that it was oppressive to refuse an appeal to any judicial authority. It was also resented by Liberals as a serious infringement of the liberty of the Press. Its repeal was, therefore, a corollary to Ripon's general policy. As regards education, his policy was, (a) to free it as far as possible from official control (the very opposite of Curzon's policy, as we shall see), and to allow free play to the natural development of local institutions, by adopting a system of grants-in-aid rather than that of Government establishments; and (b) to get as much money as possible from private sources, by encouraging private endowments, and compelling the wealthy classes to pay a fair price for the education of their sons, so that money might be found for the diffusion of primary education.

"Ripon's Viceroyalty," rightly observes his biographer, "may be justly described as epoch-making in the history of India...quite apart from the spirit which animated them...no other Governor-General, from Dalhousie to Curzon, accomplished so much...and went so far...When, however, all is said, Ripon's Viceroyalty will always be memorable, not so much for any particular measure, as for the extraordinary hold which he acquired on the affection of the Indian population, and the loyal hopes with which he thus, filled their political horizon." Sir Erskine Perry wrote to Ripon with great truth: "I am sure you are making a great impression on the Native mind; they have discovered your possession of what you have in so large a measure, *Dil* (heart), and there is nothing Natives appreciate more." Curzon was the very antithesis of Ripon in this matter, despite his extraordinary achievements as an administrator.



• RIPON •
The Best of the British Viceroys. •



According to Mr. Lovat Fraser, the four outstanding achievements of Lord Curzon were "the Partition of Bengal, the solution of the problem of the North-West Frontier, the reform of the system of education, and the formulation of a land revenue policy". Of these we have already spoken of his settlement of the tribal zone. He also created the new North-West Frontier Province. His land improvement measures, such as the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900, have also been alluded to before. He entirely reorganised the Department of Agriculture, and an irrigation commission under Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff laid down a definite long-term programme for the whole of India, which made for permanent improvement. The area served by it before Curzon's time was some 21,000,000 acres; by 1920 it had increased to 28,000,000 acres; in 1929, it was 31,700,000 acres. Another measure of permanent benefit to the masses, of equal value with Ripon's extension of local self-government, was the Co-operative Societies Act of 1904. Sir Frederick Nicholson, the father of the movement, remained in India even after his retirement and spread the ideas among villagers. The co-operative societies registered by 1929-30 numbered 1,04,187, with a membership of over four millions, and a working capital amounting to £ 67,500,000 (Rs. 90 crores).

Among Curzon's other services, the creation of the Archaeological Department under the Preservation of Ancient Monuments Act, has been referred to before. The rolling stock of the railways was increased by over thirty per cent. The Police Force was raised from 150,000 to 175,000 officers and men. A Criminal Intelligence Department was added to it, and the total expenditure on police increased from about two millions to over three millions. This proved a good investment in the years immediately following which were full of political stress and turmoil, to which also the Curzonian policy made no small contribution.

Political discontent in India was not of Curzon's creation, but his attitude towards the educated classes and his imperious ways very largely added to it. Mr. Pringle Kennedy once remarked: "The English won India by pursuing the methods of Akbar; let them not lose it by imitating those of Aurangzeb." Curzon's attitude towards the Indian National Congress was very like Aurangzeb's towards music. A legend runs that when some exasperated musicians got up a mock funeral of their favourite muse, Aurangzeb seriously observed: "Bury her deep, lest she should rise again!" "My own belief," Curzon wrote to the Secretary of State, "is that Congress is tottering to its fall,

and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise." *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis*: 'the times are changed and we with them'!

Curzon's *obiter dicta* and animadversions on the 'Baboos' (educated middle-class Indians) undid the goodwill which Lord Ripon had earned for the British, more perhaps than anything else. In the course of his convocation address to Calcutta University, he made this astounding statement: "I hope I am making no false or arrogant claim when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a Western conception." That was not calculated to pour oil on the troubled waters. "In your epics," he added, "truth will often be extolled as a virtue; but quite as often it is attended with some qualification, and very often praise is given to successful deception practised with honest aim." To say the least, he was rashly indiscreet. When, as a consequence, a storm of criticism appeared in the Press, with an affectation of injured innocence, he complained: "My Convocation address to Bengali students... was travestied as an attack upon the character and scriptures of the entire nation... A more unscrupulous and mendacious agitation it is impossible to conceive." His biographer, Ronaldshay, dismisses the affair by remarking: "The whole episode was particularly unfortunate, for... it added to the distractions of the Viceroy at a time when matters of grave difficulty were crowding in upon him." Among these "grave difficulties" were those created by his Universities Act of 1904 and the Partition of Bengal (1905), as well as his quarrel with his C-in-C. Lord Kitchener, which led to Curzon's precipitate retirement from India.

The Education Commission of 1882, presided over by Sir William Hunter, in the time of Ripon, had recommended "the progressive devolution of primary, secondary and collegiate education upon private enterprise and continuous withdrawal of Government from competition therewith". Curzon followed the opposite policy of greater official control of education which, in the atmosphere described above, only added fresh fuel to the fire of public discontent and agitation. The Act of 1904 was intended to tighten Government control over the educational institutions of the country. It restricted the number of members on University Senates and vested authority in Government to approve the regulations framed by Senates, with power to add, alter or frame fresh regulations. It provided for closer inspection and more drastic rules for affiliation of colleges. Under these conditions, as the Calcutta University Commission later observed, the Indian Universities became "the most completely governmental universities in the world." The

actual composition of several of the controlling bodies gave rise to a suspicion that, under the pretext of reform, Government were vesting power in the hands of European Government servants and missionaries, "with a view to sabotaging Indian private enterprise in the field of higher education". In the words of Mr. Gokhale, it was felt that "we were to have only a perpetuation of the narrow bigoted and inexpansive rule of experts." The manner in which Government set about this business of reform was also criticised by Gokhale in the Imperial Legislative Council in unequivocal terms: "The hurried manner in which the Commission went about the country," he said, "and took evidence and submitted its report was not calculated to reassure the public mind. Finally, the holding back of the evidence recorded by the Commission, on the plea that its publication would involve unnecessary expense, was very unfortunate, as other Commissions had in the past published evidence ten times as voluminous and the question of economy had never been suggested. . . . A good deal of apprehension, which every right-minded person must deplore, would have been avoided, if Government had been from the beginning more careful in this matter."

Though there appeared to be much room for suspicion and criticism, it may be said with justice that Curzon really meant well by the standards of University education. His measures were on the whole calculated to improve scholarship as well as efficiency of management. The defects he sought to remove, unfortunately, still cling to many of our Universities, even after the lapse of over four decades. We started, he declared, on the wrong track "by a too slavish imitation of English models and to this day we have never purged ourselves of the taint." Worst of all, he said, "by making education the sole avenue to employment in the service of the State, we unconsciously made examination the sole test of education. . . . The university means nothing more than the final stage in the long and irksome series of examinations. . . . While we trim the wick of the intellect with mechanical accuracy, we have hardly learned how to light up the lamp of the soul." Who can deny that these remarks are as applicable today as they were when first made? Finally, Curzon observed: "Ever since the cold breath of Macaulay's rhetoric passed over the field of the Indian languages and Indian text-books, the elementary education of the people in their own tongues has shrivelled and pined."

As Marriott observed, "Of all the eminent Englishmen who, down to that time, had ruled India, . . . in an academic sense, (Lord Curzon was) incomparably the most distin-

guished." Mr. (afterwards Lord) Haldane, M.P., thought that "no more brilliant appointment could have been made". But the weighty *Times*, despite the fact that Curzon had been its frequent contributor, "was not prepared to regard the success of the appointment as a foregone conclusion". "We sincerely hope," it wrote editorially, "for Mr. Curzon's sake and that of the Empire, that Lord Salisbury's very interesting experiment will succeed." The *Saturday Review* went further and predicted that Curzon's restlessness and conceit "would not improbably 'bring us into trouble in India'. There were some gibes at his "little tricks of condescension, the almost Johnsonian pomposity of his rhetoric and other perceptible angularities". Finally, Mr. Wilfred Blunt, who was well known for his criticism of "the folly of Empire—that form of Empire, at any rate, involving the dominion of one people over another", bluntly wrote to Curzon, 'with a characteristically light and satirical touch', "I trust...that you may prove the best, the most frivolous (even remembering Lytton) and the last of our Viceroys." The Partition of Bengal brought up matters very near to the fulfilment of this prophecy. It took only one more Partition for the last of the British Viceroys to say '*nunc dimittis*'. Meanwhile, as Sir W. Lawson, Curzon's colleague and relative, wrote:

In the realms of romance in those regions far
He sits on the throne of the mighty Akbar...

The initial idea of the Partition of Bengal, like the amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code under Ripon, had not originated with the Viceroy under whom it unfortunately reached its culmination. Curzon, like Ripon, merely clinched a process which, in each case, raised a storm, which resulted in the 'modification' of original intentions. To Curzon himself the proposed Partition appeared too reasonable to be logically opposed. But the tragedy lay in his failure to recognise—with several impatient idealists in history (like Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Joseph II of Austria) that life is more compelling than mere logic.

Bengal was too large and unwieldy a province to be conveniently or efficiently governed by a single Lt.-Governor from Calcutta (so too did the Tughlaq Sultan argue, and with good reason, in the creation of a second capital at Daulatabad). "Efficiency of administration," Curzon once declared, "is, in my view, a synonym for the contentment of the governed." Bengal could be better (i.e., more efficiently) governed, if it were split into two independent provinces. It comprised 189,000 square miles inhabited by 78,000,000 people. It was therefore proposed that Eastern

Bengal with Assam (comprising 106,000 sq. miles and a population* of 31,000,000) should be constituted into a Lt.-Governor's charge, with Dacca as its capital. The moving finger wrote, and having writ would not cancel half a line, for all that the people of Bengal felt.

Curzon theoretically knew, as he wrote to the Secretary of State in London, "that public opinion has been growing all the while, is articulate, is daily becoming more powerful, (and) cannot be ignored". Yet, as Ronaldshay puts it, the nerves of the Bengalis "were thrumming like the strings of a giant harp to the magic touch of the very sentiment which Lord Curzon was inclined too lightly to brush aside". "The united voice of the whole nation," wrote Mr. B. C. Chatterjee, "rose and fell like one crying in the wilderness. None heeded it. The Viceroy persevered in his scheme of administrative division; and the English Parliament pronounced its benediction upon it. The political method of the Congress (i.e., constitutional agitation) had been tried and it had failed—and the people fell upon bitterness." There is evidence that Curzon, in his idealistic moments, knew better; though his dictatorial temper led him into contrary action, especially when his cold correct logic was opposed by warm unreasoning passion. Deep irony, therefore, runs through the following passage in his letter to Sir A. Godley, dated 27th January 1904:

To contend that it (public opinion in India) does not exist, that it has not advanced in the last fifteen years, or that it may be treated with general indifference is, in my view, to ignore the great change which is passing over this country, and which I believe history will recognise myself as having done much (whether wisely or unwisely) to accelerate; viz., the lifting of India from the level of a Dependency to the position which is bound one day to be hers, if it is not so already, namely, that of the greatest partner in the Empire.

That 'unconscious vision' has been fulfilled today: with the 'Empire' changed to 'Commonwealth'. Morley described the Partition of Bengal as "a settled fact"; it was unsettled, none the less, in 1911. The unity of Bengal was restored by royal Proclamation. Assam reverted to its position as a Chief Commissionership. Bihar and Orissa with Chota Nagpur were constituted into a new Province. This was clearly a victory for Indian Nationalism: the united voice of the Indian people was more effective than the raucous cry of the Anglo-Indians of Ripon's time. The change of the capital of British India, from Calcutta to Delhi, marked the beginning of the end of the British Empire in India.

NOTE: 'THE HOME GOVERNMENT'

By 'Home Government' is meant the authorities in England to whom the Government of India was subordinate. Before the Regulating Act of 1773, the controlling body in England was the Company's Court of Directors. After that date power was exercised by the same body, but subject to the supremacy of the British Parliament. The passing of Pitt's India Act in 1784 concentrated that control, nominally in the new Board of Control, but really in the hands of its President. When the President happened to be a man like Dundas, he was in every sense of the word supreme over the Government of India. But when lesser men succeeded him, the personality and character of the Governor-General in India often counted for more. We have noted how Wellesley treated his official superiors in England. Lord Hastings, on the other hand, complained that the Directors at home "expected as blind a compliance with their orders as the owner of an English estate might expect from his steward". But Dalhousie vigorously defended the dignity of his office "whose responsibilities," he said, "are in danger of being increased, its character lowered, and its usefulness marred, by the undue assumption and vulgar expression of a disproportionate authority at home". He characterised the Board of Control as "the board of interference".

After 1858, there was a reversal of the balance of power in favour of the Secretary of State or the Home Government generally. Many circumstances contributed to this result. In the first place, Queen Victoria started taking a very keen personal interest in every detail of her new Empire; but soon found that much had to be necessarily left to her Secretary for India. The functions hitherto shared between the Company's Directors and the ministerial President of the Board of Control, were now concentrated, nominally in the India Council, but more and more effectively in the hands of the Secretary of State for India. His councillors became mere advisers who could influence but not control policy. The High Court of Parliament was no more than a "sleepy guardian" of Indian interests; the "Grand Moghal of Whitehall" was virtually the dictator constitutionally responsible to Parliament like any other minister. After 1869, even the consent of the members of the India Council was not needed for the appointment of the members of the Viceroy's Council. Exercising a more real and more direct authority over his distant charge, and very often being a man of intimate knowledge of Indian affairs, the Indian Secretary came to be the most powerful

of the Secretaries of State. Unlike the old Presidents of the Board of Control the new Secretaries at the India Office were towering men like the Duke of Argyll, Lord Salisbury, Lord Hartington, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Lord Morley, "some eminent by character, some by talents, and some by both".

The laying of the Red Sea cable in 1870 brought London and Calcutta closer together, and left no opportunity for the latter to confront the former with accomplished facts. Bartle Frere was of the opinion that the Secretary of State should content himself "with acting as the representative of the Viceroy in the Cabinet and Parliament, and as the exponent of the Viceroy's measures to the English Parliament and people". But actually the contrary turned out to be the case. As Lord Cromer stated: "There can be no doubt that Lord Salisbury's idea was to conduct the Government of India to a very large extent by private correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy... Lord Northbrook's general view was the exact opposite of this, and I am strongly convinced that he was quite right... He recognised the subordinate position of the Viceroy, but he held that Parliament had conferred certain rights, not only on the Viceroy, but on his Council, which differentiated them in a very notable degree from subordinate officials." Lord Ripon remonstrated, "I am not sure that, if I had known how exactly matters stood (between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy), I should have come out here (India)." Lord Morley, as his *Recollections* testify, was the most domineering of the Secretaries of State for India. He insisted on his right to correspond with every official in India. Lord Minto pointed out that "endless harm has been done by this". He added, "Legally his position may be sound, but constitutionally it is impossible." But there was always the personal equation. For instance, Lord Curzon 'succeeded for a time in reversing the whole tendency of affairs'; but only for a time. His sudden retirement, on account of his tussle with Lord Kitchener over the place of the C.-in-C. in the Viceroy's Council, made it clear "that the centre of general balance of power had shifted from India to England". Nevertheless, as Dodwell sums up the issue: "It is also clear that every step in constitutional progress brought into play new tendencies to counteract those that had transferred so much of the government of India from Calcutta to Whitehall, and thus tended to redress a situation which, as Minto said, had become constitutionally impossible."

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

1. Freedom in Instalments. 2. Divided Independence.

1. Freedom in Instalments

THERE was nothing in the "steel frame" which we saw at work in the preceding chapter to encourage the hope that some day it would give place to a more satisfactory form of government which the people of India might regard as their own. It was the creation of an age when the *security* of the governors of India was considered to be more necessary for the British than the *freedom* of the governed. The urgency of the latter was only brought home to our political masters by events and forces in the twentieth century. Particularly after the Great War of 1914-18 there were indications of a changed 'angle of vision' which in due course made a 'change of heart' inevitable. That transformation was not the last stage of a previously calculated series of reforms, but the culmination of a complex process whose deeper significance we shall study in the next chapter. Briefly, as the Memorandum submitted by nineteen elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council to the Government, during the period of the Great War, put it: "What is wanted is not merely good government or efficient administration, *but government that is acceptable to the people, because it is responsible to them. That is what India understands would constitute the changed angle of vision.*" The ground for the dawning of this sense or vision was prepared, partly consciously, but mostly unconsciously, by gradual adjustments during the Crown period of British rule, outwardly indicated by the three Acts of Parliament known as the Indian Councils Acts of 1861, 1892, and 1909. It will be noticed at once that their scope and purpose were essentially different from the three Charter Acts (of 1813, 1833, and 1853) of the earlier half of the nineteenth century. This difference, as we pointed out before, was the outcome of the fateful events of 1857-8. Then indeed History, as it were, 'paused and took breath for another flight.'

The main characteristic of the Company's regime, apart from its autocracy, or rather an aspect of it, was its *personality*. The Company ruled India through *men*; the Parliament, even more than the Crown, administered India through a *machine*. The former displayed occasional sparks

of vision; the latter was 'too wooden, too iron, too antediluvian' for that. With the exception of an occasional human touch, as under a Ripon or a Curzon, the British Government during the latter half of the nineteenth century was too impersonal and mechanical to have any appeal for our hearts or imagination. The contrast is well brought out in some of the important utterances of officials and non-officials, in England as well as India, during the two periods.

As early as 1818, Governor-General Lord Hastings wrote in his private journals: "A time, not very remote, will arrive when England will, on sound principles of policy, wish to relinquish the domination which she has gradually . . . assumed over this country, and from which she cannot at present recede. At that hour it would be the proudest boast, and most delightful reflection, that she had used her sovereignty towards enlightening her *temporary subjects* so as to enable the native communities to *walk alone* in the paths of justice, and to maintain, with probity, towards their benefactors that commercial intercourse in which we should then find a solid interest." About the same time, Mount Stuart Elphinstone (Governor of Bombay, 1819-27) wrote: "A time of separation must come; and it is for our interest to have an early separation from a civilised people rather than a violent rupture with a barbarous nation . . ." In 1824 Sir Thomas Munro expressed the view that "Whenever such a time shall arrive, it will probably be best for both countries that the British control over India should be gradually withdrawn." That was also the fulfilment Macaulay looked forward to in 1833, as "the proudest day in English history." The spirit of Section 87 of the Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 were also in consonance with this attitude and policy. But, unfortunately, when the 'machine' succeeded 'men', what was promised 'to the ear' was broken 'to the heart'. Fear, hesitation, caution, suspicion, took the place of the old frank and confiding faith. If experiments were then made with increasing association of Indians with their government, it was an antidote against the perils of "continuing to legislate for millions of people," as Bartle Frere remarked, "with few means of knowing, except by rebellion, whether the laws suit them or not." It was thought expedient to create some device that would act like the *darbar* of an Indian prince, a sounding board to sense 'discontent before it becomes disaffection.' The British, to use another description of Macaulay's, seemed to be "walking in darkness—we do not distinctly see whither we are going. It is the wisdom of man so situated to feel his way, and not to plant his foot till he is well assured that the ground before

him is firm." The shock of 1857 had dried up the fountain of trust and sterilised the seeds of statesmanship. "The longer, in fact, that the British Raj lasted," writes Professor Coupland, "the harder it seemed to contemplate its replacement by an Indian Raj."

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 bore all the marks of the psychology described above. The Government of India was still subordinate to the British Parliament through the new Secretary of State and his Council; the enlarged Executive Council (with twelve new members added for legislative purposes) was subordinate to the dominating will of the Viceroy. Out of these twelve 'legislative members' six were to be 'non-officials', all of whom *could be* Indians. But whatever the colour of their skins, the iron limitations that were prescribed to their functions made the racial aspect appear quite insignificant. The older Council of 1853 was considered to have worked too 'dangerously on parliamentary lines': asking questions and discussing Government actions and policies. Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State, even spoke of the "mischiefs" resulting from such practices as having been "great", and strictly circumscribed the functions of the Viceroy's Council to mere legislation, or more correctly, to advising the Governor-General on legislative enactments.

In the first instance, measures relating to the public debt or public revenues, religion, military and naval matters, and relations with foreign princes and states were not to be introduced without the previous sanction of the Governor-General. Secondly, the Act gave an absolute veto to the Governor-General, without whose assent no measure could become law. Thirdly, the Act reserved to Her Majesty, acting through the Secretary of State, the right to disallow Acts passed by the Council. Fourthly, an express power was given by the Act to the Governor-General, in cases of emergency, to make and promulgate ordinances.

This Act, therefore, did no more than provide the Governor-General opportunities for nominating some Indians to associate themselves with his absolute government, thereby "to conciliate to our rule the minds of natives of high rank", as Sir Charles Wood put it. On the other hand, even 'the first tender shoots' of the 'Anglo-Indian House of Commons' were 'promptly nipped off' by the Act of 1861. Yet, "Parliament ceased to assert control," as the Montford Report stated, "at the very moment when it had acquired it." Its perfunctory debates "attended by a handful of members with Indian interests," writes A. B. Keith, "convinced resentful Indian visitors to the Commons of the complete

indifference of the British people to Indian affairs." Nevertheless, theoretically, it was laid down that 'the final control and direction of the affairs of India rest with the Home Government, and not with the authorities appointed and established by the Crown, under Parliamentary enactment, in India itself... The Government established in India is (from the nature of the case) subordinate to the Imperial Government at Home. And no Government can be subordinate unless it is within the power of the superior Government to order what is to be done or left undone, and to enforce on its officers, through the ordinary and constitutional means, obedience to its directions as to the use which they are to make of official position and power in furtherance of the policy which has been finally decided upon by the advisers of the Crown.' The upshot of the whole matter was unequivocally expressed, in 1876, by Disraeli, when he remarked that the Queen assumed the title of Empress to show the world "that the Parliament of England has resolved to uphold the Empire of India."

The English have been caricatured by their enemies and critics as a nation of shop-keepers. We may consider this an admission of their practical, hard-headed and business-like instincts. On the other hand, many Englishmen were wedded to the belief that they were in India for the good of the Indians. Without challenging this claim, whose validity we have examined in a preceding chapter, it is permissible to add that the English came to India also for our goods. "The financial and commercial arguments for maintaining the stability of the British Raj," writes Coupland, "were also steadily growing stronger. The total amount of British money invested in the public debt or private enterprise in India was rising year by year. By 1900 the public debt was over £200 millions, most of it owed to British stockholders, and British private investments in banking companies, in jute and tea plantations, and in various other forms of business were estimated at over £300 millions. The volume of trade was likewise growing in this period." Consequently, it is not surprising that like Disraeli, all classes in England, were "resolved to uphold the Empire of India." Even John Bright, who was a great friend of Indian nationalists, held that India's freedom would be "a matter of generations." "So the question of constitutional advance remained in abeyance in British circles. When at last it was raised, it was Indians who raised it." (Coupland).

The Indian National Congress, to whose work we very largely owe our freedom today, was born in 1885. We shall deal with its activities and growth in the last chapter of

this book. Owing to the pressure it unceasingly exerted, and other causes, constitutional advance, though occasionally held in abeyance or slowed down, became a necessity. It is interesting as well as instructive to compare and contrast its history with the parallel movement in Ireland, during the same period (1861-1919), leading to dissimilar results. While Irish Home Rule was a 'dominant issue of party warfare' in England, the major issues in India remained a national interest. "Conservatives, may be, were readier to doubt and Liberals to believe, but there was no real conflict of principle. . . It was a period of doubt culminating in an act of faith."

Since Ripon's time local self-governing institutions had come to stay and become laboratories for testing the representative principle. In 1892 it was felt that time had come for its extension to the legislative sphere. The Act of 1861 provided only for nomination; now, not only was the proportion of nominated non-officials to the officials increased in further enlarged legislatures (central and provincial), but indirect election of a sort was also admitted. The Act of 1861 had also revived the Provincial Councils superseded in 1833; their reconstitution was on the same lines as of the Central legislature. In the future, the former were to be allowed to function on more liberal principles than the latter. The general advance followed two clear methods: viz. (a) increasing the total number of members and the proportion of the non-officials to the officials, and the elected to the non-elected, progressively, and (b) transferring more and more powers to the reformed Councils. But, while the Councils were numerically enlarged, freedom lingered far behind them. They were becoming more and more *representative*, but not equally *responsible*. Nor was this in any way different from the intentions of the framers of these "reforms".

Lord Dufferin, like Sir Charles Wood on an earlier occasion, made it perfectly clear that it was not his intention to make even an "approach . . . to English Parliamentary government and an English constitution." Such a conclusion, he was emphatic in pointing out, "would be very wide of the mark, and it would be wrong to leave either the India Office or the Indian public under so erroneous an impression." Apart from the reservation to the Governor of the right of veto, the Councils were to be so composed that there would be more officials, 'obliged at need to vote for the Government, than non-officials.' There would be ten official members, in the Governor-General's Council, as against five who were directly nominated, and four 'quasi-elected' (i.e., by nomination of those recommended

by bodies like the local boards, landlords, universities, and chambers of commerce). This was described by Dufferin as "a plan for the enlargement of our provincial councils, for the enhancement of their status, the multiplication of their functions, the partial introduction into them of the elective principle, and the liberalisation of their general character as political institutions." Curzon ridiculed the very idea of "representative government" for a people of whom the vast majority consisted of "voiceless millions". Kimberley declared, "The notion of parliamentary representation of so vast a country, almost as large as Europe, containing so large a number of different races, is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men." Nevertheless, Sir Reginald Coupland, describes this Indian Councils Act of 1892 as "a *revolutionary change*... so gently and unobtrusively enacted." It did, as a matter of fact, no more than provide for futile debates by members who could not touch a pie in a previously settled budget.

The next instalment of reform came in 1909. Meanwhile the current of events and the pressure of Indian public opinion were growing vehement day by day. This aspect of the background of the reforms will be more fully described in the next chapter. Even the very patient and moderate Mr. G. K. Gokhale had come to feel by 1907 that the "public mind is in a state of great tension", and "there should be no unnecessary delay" in the matter of "concessions" by the Government. "The situation is an anxious—almost a critical one," he said, "and unless the highest statesmanship inspires the counsels of the Government, difficulties threaten to arise of which no man can foresee the end." The reason for such tension was that the political system of India was too rigid and outworn to satisfy the natural aspirations of the people. The incubus of the 'steel-frame' was weighing more and more heavily on our body-politic; the Secretary of State was still a dictator whose autocracy was resented by even the Government of India; and finally the Government of India, with all its paraphernalia of enlarged 'legislative councils' (central and provincial), was really government by an executive not responsible to the people of India. "But such a method of veiling autocracy behind an artificial majority," writes Dodwell, "was on the whole unfortunate." In England the substance of power was in the hands of the legislature; the head of the executive (the monarch) only retained the empty shell of prestige. In India 'the form was conceded to the legislature while the substance was retained by the executive.' "The process," says Dodwell, "was easily capable of being

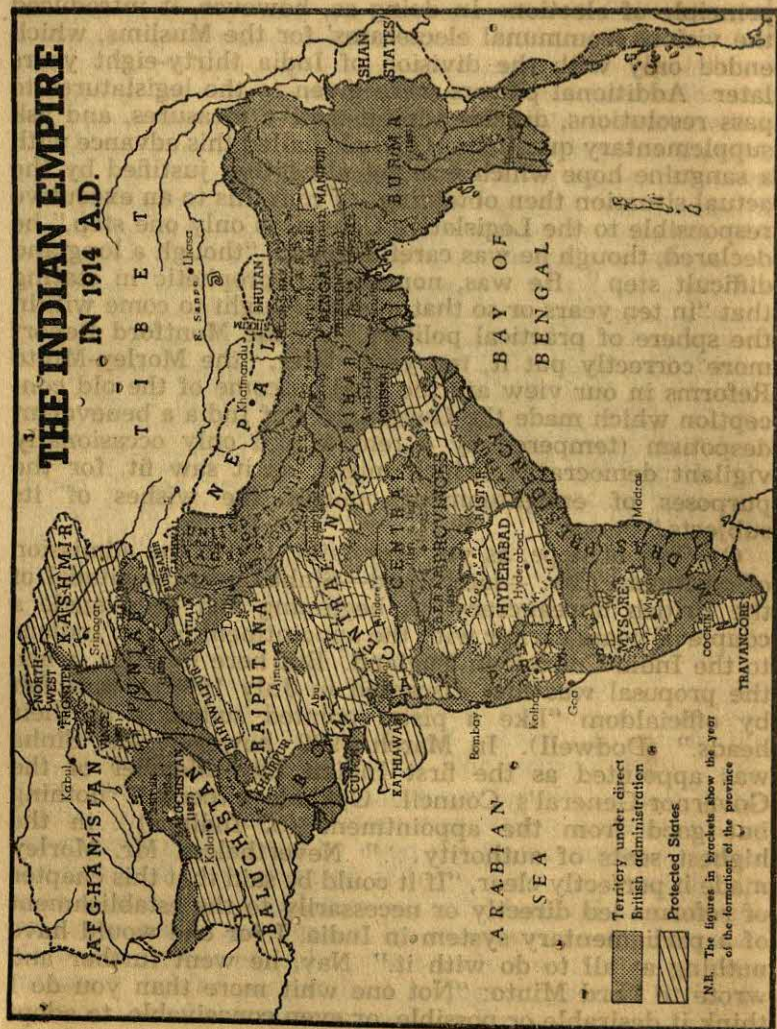
represented as giving with one hand what you took away with the other."

The Morley-Minto Reform Act of 1909 further enlarged the legislatures, provided for 'non-official' majorities in the provincial legislative councils, and definitely accepted the principle of election. In doing so, however, it introduced the vicious 'communal electorates' for the Muslims, which ended only with the division of India thirty-eight years later. Additional powers were given to the legislatures to pass resolutions, discuss administrative measures, and ask supplementary questions. Gokhale hailed this advance with a sanguine hope which was not altogether justified by the actual situation then obtaining. "From this to an executive responsible to the Legislative Council is only one step," he declared, though he was careful to add, "though a long and difficult step." He was, nonetheless, prophetic in stating that "in ten years or so that question ought to come within the sphere of practical politics." As the Montford Report more correctly put it, ten years later, "the Morley-Minto Reforms in our view are the final outcome of the old conception which made the Government of India a benevolent despotism (tempered by a remote and only occasionally vigilant democracy), which might, as it saw fit, for the purposes of enlightenment consult the wishes of its subjects."

One ray of hope, as yet very faint, lay in the admission of an Indian (Mr. —later Lord—Sinha) into the citadel of the British bureaucracy. A beginning had been made a couple of years earlier with the appointment of two Indians to the India Council in England. But here in India, when the proposal was first discussed in July 1906, it was felt by officialdom "like a pistol pointed suddenly at their heads." (Dodwell). In March 1909, however, Mr. Sinha was appointed as the first Indian Law Member of the Governor-General's Council. Gokhale expected "nothing but good from the appointment (of Indians)... in the highest seats of authority..." Nevertheless, Mr. Morley made it perfectly clear, "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it." Nay, he went further and wrote to Lord Minto: "Not one whit more than you do I think it desirable or possible, or even conceivable, to adopt English political institutions to the nations who inhabit India." To Gokhale himself, to whom he was very courteous, Morley "made no secret of my conviction that for many a day to come—long beyond the short span that may be left to us—this ("India to be on the footing of a self-govern-

ing Colony" as Gokhale hoped she would be) was a mere dream."

But several factors combined to bring that dream nearer fulfilment than Morley had the courage to anticipate.



Within the prophetic ten years envisioned by Gokhale in 1909, the "long and difficult step" of having an executive responsible to the legislature came to be "within the sphere of practical politics." The Act of 1919—at least at points—

"crossed the line between legislative and executive authority." In any case, as Dodwell wrote, "whether it succeed or whether it fail, the Report of 1918 marks a decisive epoch in the modern history of India". The Report alluded to was foreshadowed by the historic declaration of 17th August 1917, made by Mr. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State, that "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of *responsible government in India* as an integral part of the British Empire..." Though the stages in this "progressive realisation" were to be determined solely by the British Parliament, and in spite of its ultra-cautious wording, this was the first authoritative declaration of the ultimate goal in India. It was what moderate political leaders in India like Gokhale had always looked forward to and demanded. But till now India had not been considered ripe for it. (We rather think that England was not ripe for the adoption of such a policy.) But thanks to the persistent efforts of men like Gokhale inside the Councils and of men like Bal Gangadhar Tilak outside them, the increasing tension all over the country (owing to political as well as economic causes) and India's impressive contributions* (in men, money and munitions) to the war effort—for a war (1914-18) avowedly fought to make the 'world safe for democracy' and in support of the principle of 'self-determination' for nations,—the claim of India could no

* "The story of India's War effort," writes Sir John Marriott, "is truly magnificent, but it must be read in the specialised histories of the War." (*The Official History of the War*—H.M. S.O.) By the end of the War India's contribution in money exceeded £113,000,000. Besides bearing the cost of the Indian troops fighting in Mesopotamia, Palestine, East Africa, etc., and contributing £73,000,000 to the War Loans, our Legislative Council voted a free gift to the British Treasury of £100,000,000—"a substantial mark of sympathy from a country so poor in proportion to its size and population." (Dodwell). In addition to this, taxation in India reached its saturation point, and that in the wake of the colossal expenditure entailed by the recent change of capital from Calcutta to Delhi (which originally estimated at £4,000,000, really cost half as much again). 600,000 combatants and 474 non-combatants went overseas, of whom no fewer than 26,000 were officers and men of the Imperial Service Forces, 53,000 Indians were killed. Lord Curzon spoke of this loss as "shattering", but added: "In the face of these trials and difficulties the cheerfulness, the loyalty, the good discipline and intrepid courage of these denizens of another climate cannot be too highly praised."

longer be morally ignored. The crisis of the war, in the summer of 1917, when it was absolutely necessary to redouble the war-effort in every way, also made some such declaration to placate Indian public opinion expedient. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, consequently, rationalised the necessity and argued: "Englishmen believe in responsible government as the best form of government they know; and now in response to requests from India they have promised to extend this to India." The inspiring motive behind India's colossal contributions to the war was succinctly indicated by Sir Surendranath Banerjee when he said: "We aspire to Colonial Self-Government; then we ought to emulate the example of the Colonials, and try to do what they are doing."

Notwithstanding all this, the ultimate result of the Reform Act of 1919 was, as A. B. Keith pointed out, to leave the Executive "wholly free from direct authority of the Legislature." The latter was considerably enlarged—with a Council of State and Legislative Assembly at the centre, and unicameral Legislative Councils in the provinces—with restricted official 'blocs' and elected majorities; but the highly controversial 'communal electorates' at the same time, extended to other groups like the Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and Indian Christians. Freedom of local self-government from all external interference was increased, and the provincial administration was subjected to 'Dyarchy' (i.e., double government) through the creation of 'transferred' and 'reserved' subjects (i.e., spheres controlled by popularly elected ministers and those directly administered by the Governor and his Executive Council, respectively). The principle on which this bifurcation was made was rooted in the ancient lack of confidence in the Indian's capacity to manage his own affairs. Only such subjects were transferred to his care "in which the mistakes that occur, though serious, would not be irremediable." The actual difficulty of working such a system was well brought out by Sir K. V. Reddy, ex-Minister (Madras), in his Memorandum to the Reforms Enquiry Committee:

"I was Minister for Development," he declared, "without the Forests. I was the Minister for Agriculture minus Irrigation. As Minister of Agriculture, I had nothing to do with the Madras Agriculturists' Loans Act or the Madras Land Improvement Loans Act... Famine Relief of course could not be touched by the Minister for Agriculture. The efficacy or efficiency of a Minister for Agriculture without having anything to do with Irrigation, Agricultural Loans, Land Improvement Loans and Famine Relief is better imagined than described. Then

again, I was a Minister for Industries without Factories, Boilers, Electricity, and water-power, mines or labour, —all of which are reserved subjects."

Finance, which is of key importance, was a reserved subject, as also, 'Law and Order'. While the elected Ministers were to serve two masters (the electorate and the Governor), the Executive Councillors (in charge of Reserved subjects) were responsible only to the Governor. "The association of the Reserved Half with the Finance Department," writes K. V. Punnaiah, "placed them in an advantageous position. As every proposal for expenditure from every department had to pass through the Finance Department, all schemes in the Transferred Departments were fully known to the Reserved Half through the Finance Department, while what was passing on in the Reserved Departments was not known to the Transferred Half... The Executive Councillors, taking advantage of this knowledge, were able to apply for re-appropriation at a comparatively early stage, while the Ministers were often too late in their applications. The Executive Councillors, therefore, got larger sums of money by way of re-appropriation and were thereby enabled to carry their schemes through, while the Ministers suffered for lack of money!"

Over and above this, the Governors and the Governor-General had their 'special powers' in the exercise of which they could allow or disallow measures contrary to the wishes of the Ministers or the Legislatures if such 'certification' was considered by them necessary in the interests of 'safety and tranquillity'. The Central Government and the Secretary of State still had their overriding powers untouched, except for the advice that they were to 'relax' their control progressively as experience might indicate. Provision was also made for a Statutory Commission, at the end of the next ten years, to review the whole position with a view to determining the character and timing of further stages in India's advance on the path of 'responsible government.' As yet, it was only 'responsive'—not 'responsible'—government which had been graciously granted. Further tokens of the British intentions were indicated by the appointment of the Maharaja of Bikaner and Sir Satyendra Prasan Sinha to represent 'India' at the Imperial War Conference and the Peace Conference, followed by the latter's appointment as Under-Secretary at the India Office, and elevation to the British Peerage under the title of 'Lord Sinha of Raipur'. But for all such impressive gestures, India was dissatisfied because she rightly felt that, while she had asked for bread, she was given only stones. These 'reforms' lacked the 'savour of

freedom'. That consummation came only as the result of a struggle—unique in all history—under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. India would no longer be satisfied with 'instalments of freedom': she was determined to attain 'Swaraj' by all 'legitimate and peaceful means'. She achieved that objective in August 1947, at a cost presently to be assessed.

2. Divided Independence

We have now reached the last stage in our study of the making of Modern India. In spite of its short span of years (1919-47) it is crowded with momentous events many of which are too important to be omitted, and yet too complicated to be summarily treated. For a satisfactory understanding of the rapid developments of this period one has necessarily to go to special treatises. Our effort here will be to provide the reader with as clear an introduction to the subject as may be possible within the compass of a few pages. This is necessary both as an epilogue to what has gone before and as a prologue to current history. In dealing with this part of our study we have the unavoidable handicap of being participators in the events we describe, and lack the advantages of detached observers. Nevertheless the task cannot be shirked.

Looking at the situation as a whole from the angle of the final result, there are three actors on the stage during this last but one act of the drama: *viz.* Britain, India, and the makers of Pakistan. The first act closed in 1858, the second ended in 1911, the third in 1919, and the fourth terminated with the Government of India Act of 1935. The curtain finally drops at the close of the fifth act, on 15th August 1947. India, like a tragic hero, has had to purchase complete freedom at the cost of being divided. Whatever may be in store for us in the future, we have to content ourselves for the present with accepting this award of Destiny in a spirit of hopeful resignation. Our main interest is India—the central of the three actors—Britain and the makers of Pakistan coming in only for the necessary minimum of reference, for obvious reasons.

Until 1919 Britain's hold on India was confident and secure. But World War I had transformed India so radically that the old attitude towards this country and its peoples was no longer tenable. The pressure of events both in and outside India was compelling Britain to change her policy towards us in order to achieve through good will, if possible, what could not be done by sheer force. It was unfortunate, therefore, that the inauguration of the Montford Reforms should have synchronised with the

passing of the Rowlatt Act arming the executive with extraordinary powers to deport individuals, to set up special tribunals, and to control the press, etc. While the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General declared: 'Above all things, it is our will and pleasure that the plans laid by Our Parliament for the progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of Our Empire may come to fruition, to the end that British India may attain its *due place among Our Dominions*', the Black Act was forged by the defenders of the *ancient regime*, fighting a desperate 'rear-guard action' against resurgent nationalism. A discerning British writer observed: "The wave of unrest which swept through the country after the War was totally unlike any of the earlier periods of agitation... The new phase of nationalism was broad enough to include the Moslems and sufficiently popular to attract the masses."

The magician who brought about this great metamorphosis was Mahatma Gandhi. The countrywide agitation against the Rowlatt 'Defence of India' (against the *Indians*) brought his 'inevitable leadership' into existence, in the beginning of 1919. His entry in the arena of Indian politics may not be better described than in the matchless words of Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:

He also joined his voice to the universal outcry. But this voice was somehow different from the others. It was quiet and low, and yet it could be heard above the shouting of the multitude; it was soft and gentle, and yet there seemed to be steel hidden away somewhere in it; it was courteous and full of appeal, and yet there was something grim and frightening in it; every word was full of meaning and seemed to carry a deadly earnestness. Behind the language of peace and friendship there was power and the quivering shadow of action and a determination not to submit to a wrong. We are familiar with that voice now;... But it was new to us in February and March 1919; we did not quite know what to make of it, but we were thrilled. This was something very different from our noisy politics of condemnation and nothing else, long speeches always ending in the same futile and ineffective resolutions of protest which nobody took very seriously. *This was the politics of action, not of talk...*

The events of this period of turmoil were summarily described by Nehru thus: "Satyagraha Day—all-India *hartals* and complete suspension of business—firing by the police and military at Delhi and Amritsar, and the killing of many people—mob violence in Amritsar and Ahmeda-

bad—the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh—the long horror and terrible indignity of martial law in the Punjab.” H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught who inaugurated the Reforms in 1919, significantly remarked, “The shadow of Amritsar has lengthened over the face of fair India... No one can deplore those events more intensely than I do myself... As an old friend of India, I appeal to you all, British and Indians, to bury along with the dead past the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past; to forgive where you ought to forgive and to join hands and to work together to realize the hopes that rise from today.”

The King Emperor in his message also stated: “For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamed of Swaraj for their Motherland. Today you have the beginning of Swaraj within My Empire, and the widest scope and ample opportunity for progress which my other Dominions enjoy.” But these gracious words could hardly conceal the grim realities of the situation in India from Indian eyes. Even the official Hunter Commission recognised that the opposition to the Rowlatt Act “was very widespread throughout India among both moderate and extreme politicians.” The realities were, apart from the appalling poverty of the masses, our utter helplessness in the face of an iron autocracy that was trying to entrench itself behind the facade of ‘Reform’ without yielding the substance of power, and the inevitability of humiliations like the ‘crawling order’ of General Dyer at Amritsar (1919) and tragedies like the asphyxiation of 97 Maplah prisoners in a luggage-van in Malabar (1922). The Reforms were, consequently, declared by the Congress “inadequate, unsatisfactory, and disappointing”. Congress, therefore, went forward with the new weapon of ‘non-violent non-co-operation’ forged by Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhiji often confessed to having committed ‘Himalayan blunders’, but his ingenious strategy and tactics, and above all his various forms of *Satyagraha*, eminently suited the conditions in the country and the genius of the people he led. After the tragedy of Chauri Chaura, early in 1922, he decided to call a halt. Nevertheless he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to six years’ imprisonment. Still he declared: “I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk, and, if I were set free, I would still do the same.”

One of the important items in the non-co-operation programme had been the boycott of the legislatures. The suspension of the movement after Chauri Chaura, however, led to a reconsideration of that policy. It gave birth to the Swaraj Party organised by C. R. Das and Pandit

Motilal Nehru. They decided on re-entering the Councils, but pledged themselves to "uniform, continuous and sustained obstruction with a view to making government through the Assembly and the Councils impossible." In Bengal and the Central Provinces they secured large majorities and compelled the Governors to take over the entire administration in their own hands, as the constitution could not be worked.

These happenings convinced the British authorities that the time had come when it was necessary to review the whole situation. The wise Mr. G. K. Gokhale had uttered a warning in 1908, which is worth recalling at this stage. At the close of his Budget speech that year he declared:

Whatever reforms are taken in hand, let them be dealt with frankly and generously. And let not the words, 'too late' be written on every one of them. For while the Government stands considering—hesitating, receding, debating within itself 'to grant or not to grant, that is the question'—opportunities rush past it which can never be recalled. And the moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on.

Anticipating by two years the Statutory Commission provided for in the Act of 1919, a Royal Commission was sent out to India in 1927 (normally due in 1929), under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon. This "All White" Commission only provoked a boycott and rallied moderate nationalist opinion round the demand for 'Dominion Status' which that Commission was too orthodox to concede. The Congress, under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru, now (1929) definitely declared its objective to be the attainment of "complete independence". "The real thing is the conquest of power," said Nehru, "by whatever name it may be called: I do not think that any form of Dominion Status applicable to India will give us real power. A test of this power would be the entire withdrawal of the alien army of occupation and economic control. Let us therefore concentrate on these and the rest will follow."

Steering a middle course between the futile Simon Commission and the hostile Congress, Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, was authorised to announce that "the natural issue of India's constitutional progress", as contemplated in the announcement of 1917, was "the attainment of Dominion Status." A Round Table Conference was summoned at London, in December 1930, and Liberals like Mr. M. R. Jayakar found occasion to assure the British that "If you give India Dominion Status today the cry of independence will die of itself." Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru

added: "Provide as many safeguards as you can (may?) so long as those safeguards do not destroy the vital principle, and then go ahead with courage and with faith." When Mahatma Gandhi was persuaded to attend the second session of the Round Table Conference, in the following year, he demanded to be convinced that those "safeguards" shall be "demonstrably in the interests of India." "I am here," he told the Conference unequivocally, "very respectfully to claim, on behalf of the Congress, complete control over the defence forces and over foreign affairs." Granted that, he did not aspire to "complete independence."

A third session of the Conference, held in the last months of 1932, merely confirmed the proceedings of the earlier two. The net result of these confabulations was not unlike that of the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons, described in the Hindu *Puranas*. It brought forth nectar as well as poison. For the first time in British Indian history, the Indian Princes sat round a conference table together with their countrymen from 'British India' to discuss the future of their common Motherland. The Maharaja of Bikaner declared that "the passion for an equal status in the eyes of the world... was the dominant force amongst all thinking Indians today", and announced the willingness of the Princes to enter a Federation "with a British India which is self-governing." That was indeed a very happy augury for the future. On the other hand, the 'minorities question' not merely remained unsolved, but became a shade worse for all the 'linen washing' at the Imperial metropolis. Our leaders had to swallow the self-invited 'Communal Award' of Ramsay MacDonald, modified only by the Poona Pact so far as the 'Scheduled Castes' were concerned. The last was the outcome of Mahatma Gandhi's famous 'fast unto death' (1932) called off only by Dr. Ambedkar's timely compromise. Still a new problem had been created by the multiplication of 'minorities'. The Act of 1935 reflected all these experiences 'as through a mirror darkly'.

A Joint Select Committee of the two houses of Parliament under the chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow incubated the egg of the White Paper—which comprised only the white and empty shell without the living yolk of Dominion Status—and hatched a Bill which became the Government of India Act of 1935 when it received the Royal assent on 4th. August, 1935. 'It was tenaciously resisted at each stage by the right-wing Conservatives led by Mr. Churchill in the Commons and Lord Salisbury in the Lords.' This monster-child of the Mother of Parliaments, so reluctantly

born and brought into the light of day by a Caesarian operation, was characterised by Jawaharlal Nehru as "a new charter of slavery". "It would be a fatal error," he said, "for the Congress to accept office. That would inevitably involve co-operation with British Imperialism." Radical and uncompromising as this criticism may appear, it was provoked by the nature of the ill-born if not totally still-born child, and the obstinate refusal of the British Government even to countenance the phrase 'Dominion Status' in the composition of the Act. While the Act of 1919 was now superseded, its preamble embodying the doctrine of 'gradual development' and 'progressive realisation' was retained. Not only that.

Dyarchy which had been weighed in the provincial scales and found wanting, was now introduced in the Centre. It envisaged a Federation of 'autonomous' British Indian Provinces together with the Indian States, if and when at least 50 per cent of the latter voluntarily 'acceded'. The Central Government was to have 'reserved' and 'transferred' compartments, with an elaborate armoury of Safeguards, Reservations, Special Responsibilities, Over-riding Powers, etc., vested in the Governor-General. The Governors of Provinces, too, were armed with like powers to act 'in their discretion' and 'in their individual judgment', and finally (under Section 93) to resume full charge of the administration in a state of emergency. "The reservations and safeguards were certainly intended to be real," writes Coupland, "and all Indian opinion outside the Congress had agreed that something of the sort was needed during the transition to full Dominion Status." Coupland's frail prop for the latter presumption was the opinion of Sir Cowasji Jehangir, President of the National Liberal Federation (1936), who in his 'Liberal' optimism declared: "The constitution should be given a fair trial. Its success must ultimately lead to a vast expansion of powers, equal to those enjoyed by the Dominions." But events moved faster than opinions.

The Provincial part of the Act came into operation on 1st April 1937. The Central plan remained unfulfilled for reasons too complicated to be briefly explained. The problem was solved only by the ultimate division of the country ten years later. Meanwhile, that is until the new Act came into part operation, the prospects of a United and Free India were not in any sense chimerical, despite important differences between the Congress and the Muslim League. In 1916 they had entered into a Pact at Lucknow, the chief planks of which were still relevant: (i) the demand that the Provinces should remain independent of

the Centre, and (ii) that India should have full Dominion Status, with the Secretary of State acting on a par with the Colonial Secretaries in respect of the other Dominions. The Congress acquiesced in the separate electorates on the League's acceptance of the major demands. In 1920-21 the *entente* was strengthened by the Congress acting in complete unison with the Muslim Khilafat movement. 'Mr. Jinnah and the left wing of the League joined with Congress spokesmen in attacking the British Government and demanding a fuller concession of parliamentary government.' Despite the divergence created by the Nehru Report of 1928, on the question of 'communal electorates', the 'Communal Award' was accepted for the time being by both parties, and Mr. Jinnah was supported by the Congress members in the Central Assembly, in 1935, in condemning the Federal part of the new constitution as "fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable," and yet demanding "the prompt establishment of full responsible government in a federated British India." "This alliance on constitutional questions," says Coupland, "was more or less consistently maintained on others. In 1935 and again in 1936 it brought about the rejection of the budget and forced the Governor-General to 'certify' it. Never before, in fact, had the Nationalist Opposition pressed the Government so hard as it did in this brief period of Hindu-Moslem co-operation. Of the fourteen occasions on which 'certification' was employed between 1921 and 1940, eight occurred in and after 1935." The distribution of seats in the Central Assembly of 1935 showed, according to the same writer, "that the Government was bound to be defeated if the Muslim Independents voted with the Congress." Unfortunately, these prospects of a united front rapidly gave place to fissiparous tendencies with deplorable consequences.

The rift in the lute started with the elections of 1937. They brought Congress ministries in office in most of the provinces. Sind and Orissa were created new provinces, which together with the N.W.F.P. made a total of eleven. Among these, Congress government was established in seven (Bombay, Madras, U.P., Bihar, C. P., Orissa, and N.W.F.P.). In 1938 coalitions were formed in Sind and Assam, leaving only the Punjab and Bengal to the Muslims beyond the pale of the Congress. Encouraged by these results the Congress began in earnest to carry out its constructive programmes of economic and social reforms for the amelioration of the masses, and at the same time started a 'mass contact' movement to win over Muslims to Congress allegiance. This was too much of a challenge

to Mr. Jinnah and the League and their reactions were violent.

Though Mr. Jinnah like the Congress had accepted the principle of federation at the centre, demanding full and real responsibility, and agreed to work the provincial part of the constitution "for what it was worth", he now started repudiating both, and even democracy of the parliamentary type, as unsuitable to Indian conditions. When the Congress proposed a 'home-made' constitution through a constituent assembly, Mr. Jinnah denounced it as "a packed body, manoeuvred and managed by a Congress caucus." All through 1938, as Coupland has pointed out, "the gulf steadily widened." "If the language of the Congress leaders was restrained, Mr. Jinnah grew bitter. At the League session at the end of the year—the most crowded and enthusiastic that had yet been held—he declared that all hope of communal peace had been wrecked 'on the rocks of Congress Fascism'."

"The Muslims think that no tyranny can be as great as the tyranny of the majority". 'Atrocity' stories were freely circulated against the Congress governments. "But that did not mean," writes Coupland, "that the Congress Ministries had lent themselves to a policy of communal injustice, still less of deliberate persecution. Such a gross violation of the principles that their leaders had so long preached and the promises they had so often made was inconceivable, nor, of course, could the Muslim members of the Ministries have acquiesced in it. The official rebuttal of the League's charges might be regarded as partisan, but it was broadly confirmed by neutral observers. The Governor of the U.P., for example, after his retirement at the end of 1939, recorded his opinion that 'in dealing with communal issues' Ministers had 'normally acted with impartiality and a desire to do what was fair'. But such an impartial judgment was not to be expected among the Moslem masses." When in the exigencies created by the war with Hitler the Congress Ministries resigned, Mr. Jinnah considered it a 'Day of Deliverance' and celebrated it with a sense of negative joy! The hour of Deliverance, however, came to India in a totally different way..

It was the supreme hour of decision and action for the Congress. It was very soon to prove also an hour of supreme trial and test of its capacity to win Swaraj in our life time. It had accepted office not simply 'to cool its heels'. It had insisted on guarantees from the Viceroy and Governors not to exercise their arbitrary powers, and got those assurances. But now when the war broke out in Europe, India was entangled in it as a belligerent without

even the formality of consulting our wishes. With great chagrin Congress declared: "We are asked to fight, not because we choose to fight but because England wants us to fight... Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy... But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom, when that very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possessed taken away from her..." From this to the 'Quit India' campaign was not a far cry. Yet that came only after four years of 'wandering in the wilderness' and futile negotiations,—as a last desperate measure: "to do or die."

The Congress Working Committee asked: "Do they (the war aims) include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people?" The A.I.C.C. demanded: "India must be declared an independent nation, and present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent."

With the fall of France, in the summer of 1940, an Act of the British Parliament conferred on the Governor-General extraordinary powers 'in the event of a complete breakdown of communications with the United Kingdom.' On 8th August 1940, Lord Linlithgow made it clear that the British Government "could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements (obviously the Muslims were implied) in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government." This was indeed very encouraging to Mr. Jinnah. In the election manifesto of 1935, drafted under his direction, the Lucknow Pact had been hailed as "one of the greatest beacon-lights in the constitutional history of India, a signal proof of the identity of purpose, earnestness and co-operation between the two great sections of the people of India." That sense of unity had made some sort of parliamentary government possible in all the eleven provinces since 1937. But the "clean throw back to autocracy" (Coupland) by the invocation of Section 93—Jinnah's "Day of Deliverance"—brought back the rule of the executive (Governors) in the provinces relinquished by the Congress. "In one non-Congress Province, indeed, in Sind, there were more serious and insuperable disputes than in any Congress Province; and they culminated in the Governor's dismissal of the Premier in the course of the disorders in the autumn of 1942." (Coupland). The

results of the elections, in all the non-Congress provinces were such that Coalition Ministries became inevitable. But in the new temper of opposition to the Congress Mr. Jinnah was getting more and more enamoured of the idea of Pakistan. Before the Joint Select Committee in 1933, the League spokesman had stated, "As far as I know, it is only a students' scheme." Another member of the delegation had pronounced it "chimerical and impracticable". In September 1939 the League Working Committee declared that Muslim India was 'irrevocably opposed' to any 'federal objective'. In January 1940, Mr. Jinnah wrote: "There are in India two nations who both must share the governance of their common motherland." "Sharing is not separation," shrewdly observes Coupland, "and Mr. Jinnah had not yet crossed the line." But in March the 'line' was crossed—or rather the Rubicon—for the League Session at Lahore unequivocally declared for the constitution of the Muslim-majority Regions into "independent States", and authorised its Working Committee to frame a constitution 'providing for the assumption finally by the respective Regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs, and such other matters as may be necessary.' Pakistan so conceived remained to be achieved through 'blood, sweat, tears, and toil' of millions throughout India.

"The partition of India is the only solution", declared Mr. Jinnah. "It is a counsel of despair and, I believe, of wholly unnecessary despair," said Mr. Amery; and it could not solve the minority problem. But it was no time for debate; it was time for action. The war was dragging on, and Mahatma Gandhi was demanding "let the British withdraw from India, and we shall solve our domestic problems in our own way." "At the end of 1941 there was more disbelief in British honesty than there had ever been before." (Coupland). It could not be otherwise, for Mr. Churchill categorically confined the Atlantic Charter to "nations now under the German yoke"—not under the British yoke! "At this late stage," said Nehru, "to talk of coming to terms with the British Government is out of the question." Nevertheless, Mr. Churchill was anxious to save India from the Japanese. Rangoon had fallen to 'the English of the East' already; they were about to knock at our eastern frontier defences. Britain sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India on his famous mission. In March 1942 he put forward the Draft Proposals: (i) India to be a Dominion with power to secede, at the earliest possible moment after the war ended; (ii) a constitution-making body to be set up 'immediately upon the cessation

of hostilities', and the British Government to accept the constitution framed by it; *provided* that any Province or Provinces under it were given the same freedom to secede and frame independent constitutions having the 'same full status as the Indian Union'; but (iii) in the meantime the British Government to retain control of the defence of India 'as part of their world war effort' with the co-operation of the Indian peoples. With this end in view, Indian leaders were invited to immediate participation 'in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations.'

Mahatma Gandhi, in a phrase that became famous, described this as "a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank", "on the face of it too ridiculous to find acceptance anywhere." The report of the Japanese occupation of the Andamans reached India on the day the Cripps negotiations began. On 6th April the first Japanese bombs fell on Indian soil. Congress showed its willingness to join in a National Government only if it were to function immediately 'with full powers as a Cabinet with the Viceroy acting as constitutional head.' Sir Stafford's instructions did not authorise him to go so far; so on 12th April he flew back to London—a shorter distance.

Congress too decided on a short-cut to freedom. On 14th July the Working Committee passed a resolution that "British rule in India must end immediately". "There is no room left for negotiations," declared the Mahatma; "either they recognise India's independence or they don't... There is no question of 'one more chance'. After all, this is open rebellion." In his last article before he was arrested, he wrote, "I can do or die." That became the slogan of the last phase of our struggle for Independence. On 7th August, at the A.I.C.C. meeting, he declared, "We shall get our freedom by fighting, it cannot fall from the skies.... This is the last struggle of my life." This 'open rebellion' resulted in over 900 of the 'insurgents' being killed in the fighting, and 30 policemen and 11 soldiers lost their lives. The total damage effected to railways, post offices, telegraph lines, etc., was estimated at £ 1,000,000.

Following the adoption of the 'Quit India' resolution by the Working Committee, on 8th August 1942, its members were marched off to prison. They were not released until March-April 1945. During the interval Mahatma Gandhi had gone on a three weeks fast in prison. He was 73 years of age and there was great anxiety felt all over the country. The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, would not release him, and three Indian members of his Executive Council consequ-

ently resigned. Indeed it was felt, as the Mahatma said, India today, "is one vast prison containing 400 million souls." The appalling famine of 1943-4 in Bengal, which took a toll of 1,000,000 men, women and children, before relief measures began to operate effectively, revealed that India was worse than a prison. Even the avoidable loss of lives failed to be averted because of 'constitutional difficulties'. With complete autonomy in the provinces, the Centre 'could not' interfere, even though "someone had blundered" there criminally. In October 1943 Lord Wavell succeeded Linlithgow as Viceroy. But being pre-occupied with the maintenance of 'Law and Order' and the war effort, for the most part, he could only turn the blind eye to Bengal. At last, however, sheer humanity compelled Lord Wavell to retrieve the situation in that hapless province, despite 'constitutional difficulties'.

It was patent that the stalemate could not be allowed to continue for long. Conditions all over the country were fast deteriorating, and something had to be done to stop the 'rot'. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru convened a 'No-Party' conference, "C.R." produced a plausible formula, and Wavell himself flew to London in search of a solution. The Viceroy came back, on 4th June, 1945, with a plan to form an Interim-Government 'pending the preparation of a new constitution.' On the 14th June Mr. Amery declared in Parliament, "The offer of March 1942 stands in its entirety without change or qualification." It required great optimism or (blindness) to say that after the "do or die" resolution of Congress, and in the wake of the rejection of the Cripps offer by all parties, as well as Mr. Jinnah's parallel declaration in January 1945 that "We will fight for Pakistan and die for Pakistan". In March following he reiterated: "Pakistan is our irrevocable and unalterable national demand... We shall never accept any constitution on the basis of a united India." Lord Wavell called a conference at Simla, but it was doomed to failure in the face of the above attitudes.

Still Time marched on. Both Hitler and Churchill were defeated: the one on the European and the other on the Home front. With the coming in of Mr. Attlee at No. 10 Downing Street, the atmosphere began to clear up. On 23rd March 1946 a Cabinet Mission (composed of Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of Admiralty) landed in India. Before they left on 29th June 1946, they laid down the basic lines of the future political set-up of this country. There was to be a Union of India, embracing British India and the

States, and dealing only with Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Communications, with powers to raise the necessary finance. Provinces were to have complete autonomy—subject to the Centre only in respect of the above—and they were to form three Groups: A. majority Hindu; B. majority Muslim; and C. Bengal and Assam. Each Group was to settle its own constitution, and all together (along with the States) to draft a constitution for the Union. Any Province could withdraw from any of the Groups after the first General Election under the new Constitution; the entire set-up to be subject to total revision, if thought necessary, after ten years or periodically every ten years. A Treaty was to be concluded with England 'to provide for certain matters arising out of the transfer of power.' 'All the rights surrendered by the States to the Paramount Power will return to the States.' If they decided to join the Union they would retain all powers other than those ceded to the Union, and participate in the constitution-making. The 'substance of Pakistan' being thus conceded in effect, all parties including the League agreed to come into an Interim Government and proceeded with the elections to the 'Constituent Assembly.' (July, 1946).

The results, however, alarmed Mr. Jinnah. Out of 210 General seats, no fewer than 199 were captured by the Congress. Out of 78 Muslim seats 73 went to League candidates. Nevertheless, with other sympathisers, the Congress commanded allegiance of 221 members in an Assembly of 296. Mr. Jinnah, therefore, had now recourse to 'Direct Action'. He wanted the British to "Divide and Quit India". 16th August 1946 was proclaimed as the "Direct Action Day". On 29th July, the League Council at Bombay passed a resolution repudiating the short and long term agreements with the Cabinet Mission. Sir Feroze Khan Noon, a member of the League Council, declared: "We are on the threshold of a great tragedy, because neither Hindus nor the British realize the depth of our feelings... If Britain puts us under a Hindu Raj, let us tell Britain that the destruction and havoc that the Muslims will do in this country will put into the shade what Ghengiz Khan did." This was demonstrated very soon though in varying degrees in Calcutta, Noakhali, etc., with repercussions in Bihar and other places, during the rest of the year 1946. These orgies of hatred and violence convinced the people that Partition had become inevitable.

In December 1946 the British Government invited the Viceroy, and Congress, League, and Sikh representatives to London with a view to arriving at a final settlement between the League and the Congress. Though League representa-

tives had joined the Interim Government, they persisted in their intransigent attitude, making any smooth working of government impossible. On 20th February, 1947, Mr. Attlee declared in the House of Commons that the existing state of uncertainty was fraught with danger and could not be indefinitely prolonged; consequently, he announced that it was "the definite intention" of His Majesty's Government to take necessary steps to "effect the transference of power to responsible Indian hands" by a date not later than June 1948. The British Government announced its final plan for the Partition of India together with the grant of Dominion Status, on 3rd June 1947. The Constituent Assembly convened on 9th December 1946 was to continue and complete its work. The Muslim majority Provinces might convene, if they so desired, another Constituent Assembly of their own... To cut a long story short, His Majesty's Government framed the Indian Independence Bill sooner than expected, and it became law on the 18th July 1947. According to its provisions two new Dominions—India and Pakistan—were set up, the detailed implementing of which was left to the new Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, who had succeeded Lord Wavell in March 1947. The Punjab and Bengal were divided into Western and Eastern parts, and INDIA was 'vivisected' into Western Pakistan (including Sind, Baluchistan, N.W.F.P., and W.Punjab), Eastern Pakistan (comprising E.Bengal and Sylhet), and the rest constituting the Dominion of India. Thanks to the celerity of the new Governor-General, our Independence—though with its inevitable divisions—became a fact at midnight of 14-15th August, 1947. Lord Mountbatten was chosen as our first constitutional Governor-General with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as our first independent Prime Minister. The old Executive and houses of Legislature were replaced by a new Cabinet and Dominion Parliament—the Constituent Assembly discharging the functions of the latter until General Elections under the new constitution of the Independent Sovereign Democratic Republic of India.

NOTE: THE WORLD BACKGROUND.

The history of no country can be studied in isolation. No nation in the world as it is constituted today can live alone and by or for itself. Before the World War I the U.S.A. believed that the New World could keep aloof from the turmoils of the Old, but was soon dragged into Armageddon. Japan in the East, until Commodore Perry bombarded her, tried to confine herself within the shell of her medieval culture, but then realised the necessity of

coming out. The murder of the Arch-Duke of Austria at Sarajevo started the world conflagration in 1914. Japan's victory over Russia (1904-5) inspired India and the Orient with a new hope. It was, as Will Durant described it, "a turning point in modern history...and began that resurrection of Asia which promises to be the central political process of our century. All Asia took heart at the sight of the little island Empire defeating the most populous power in Europe; China plotted her revolution, and India began to dream of freedom." On the other hand, events in India since have affected the rest of the world increasingly. "Many men and women I have talked with," wrote Wendell Wilkie in his famous book—*One World*—"from Africa to Alaska asked me the question which has become almost a symbol all through Asia: What about India?" The terrible news of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination on 30th January 1949, in Delhi, shocked the remotest corners of the world in the course of a few minutes. We were dragged into two World Wars though we were not directly concerned with them, except latterly, when Japan attacked our eastern frontier. We became involved more because we were a part of the British Empire. Nevertheless, the common issue at stake in the two wars was one of vital importance to our national freedom. It was 'democracy' and 'national right to self-determination' against the challenges of imperialism, fascism and nazism. Our internal struggle in India was, therefore, part of a larger world struggle, though paradoxically we had to fight against Britain internally at the same time as being her ally externally. In the latter capacity we became member of the League of Nations after World War I, and of the United Nations Organisation after World War II. We are thus now in the very vortex of world currents. Our attainment of national independence has not made us less dependent in an inter-dependent world. If our problems in South Africa and Kashmir may not be solved without reference to the U.N.O., so may the international problems in South-East Asia and elsewhere be not solved without reference to us.

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1. Past and Present

COEXIST with the oldest civilisations, India is still one of the youngest among the free nations of the world. This paradox is writ large on the brow of Modern India. Her people are still living amidst ancient traditions, but her leadership is modern. In the foregoing pages we have partially observed how this came to be. We traced the beginnings of our modern national life from the advent of the Muslims and the Europeans. Both of these were foreigners, but left indelible impressions on our life and civilisation. The Muslims in fact were totally assimilated; nevertheless, they enriched our heritage to an extent that cannot be overestimated.

The Empire of the Muslims has vanished for ever, but their personality endures in a thousand different forms, visible and invisible. It is neither purely Hindu nor Muslim, but a harmonious blending of the two. The real Indian art of today is a legacy come down to us from Muslim times. Our Hindustani dress, both of men and women, which is so elegant, graceful, dignified and charming when not hybridised is the same as we see in Muslim paintings. Our Hindustani bearing, "adab", and forms of address, which are so majestic and yet not pompous, are a bequest to us from the Muslim courts and citizens. Our Hindustani music and musical instruments are those that gave pleasure to Muslim sovereigns, warriors and subjects alike, and derived their melodies from the soul of a melodious people. Our Hindustani painting, with its delicate touches and delightful hues, is but a vivid reflection of those picturesque times. Our Hindustani literature whether Hindi, Urdu, Persian or Urdu has come down to us with the impress of writers who directly or indirectly enjoyed Muslim patronage. And lastly, our Hindustani architecture, whether Hindu or Muslim, instead of following radically different lines, as might have been expected, "exhibits on the contrary, precisely the same fusion of ideals, the same happy blend

PART FOUR

NATIONAL SUPREMACY

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

INDIA COMES INTO HER OWN

1. Past and Present. 2. Fulfilment.

1. Past and Present

COEVAL with the oldest civilisations, India is still one of the youngest among the free nations of the world. This paradox is writ large on the brow of Modern India. Her people are still living amidst ancient traditions, but her leadership is modern. In the foregoing pages we have partially observed how this came to be. We traced the beginnings of our modern national life from the advent of the Mughals and the Europeans. Both of these were foreigners, but left indelible impressions on our life and civilisation. The Mughals in fact were totally assimilated; nevertheless, they enriched our heritage to an extent that cannot be overestimated.

The Empire of the Mughals has vanished for ever, but their personality endures in a thousand different forms, visible and invisible. It is neither purely Hindu nor Muslim, but a harmonious blending of the two... The real Indian art of today is a legacy come down to us from Mughal times... Our Hindusthani dress, both of men and women, which is so elegant, graceful, dignified and charming, when not hybridised, is the same as we see in Mughal paintings. Our Hindusthani bearing, etiquette and forms of address, which are so majestic and yet not pompous, are a bequest to us from the Mughal courtiers and citizens. Our Hindusthani music and musical instruments are those that gave pleasure to Mughal sovereigns, *sardars* and subjects alike, and derived their melodies from the soul of a melodious people. Our Hindusthani painting, with its delicate touches and delightful hues, is but a vivid reflection of those picturesque times. Our Hindusthani literature whether Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian or Urdu, has come down to us with the impress of writers who directly or indirectly enjoyed Mughal patronage. And lastly, our Hindusthani architecture, whether Hindu or Muslim, instead of following radically different lines, as might have been expected, "exhibits, on the contrary, precisely the same fusion of ideals, the same happy blend

of elegance and strength." Indeed, as Sir John Marshall observed, "Seldom in the history of mankind, has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Muhammadan and Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrasts which existed between them, the wide divergences in their culture and their religions, make the history of their impact peculiarly instructive and lend an added interest to the art and above all to the architecture which their united genius called into being."*

Modern India exhibits this synthesis, not merely of Hindu and Muslim, but also of the Eastern and Western, the Asian and European. We have today established a republican and secular State of which the characteristic forms are Western, but the inspiration and outlook are Eastern—INDIAN. Few peoples are so deeply religious as we Indians. The *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Ramayana* of Tulasidas, and the *Quran* and other religious works, continue to underline the daily lives of our masses as much as they ever did at any time. But these have not prevented us from putting ourselves *en rapporte* with the spirit of the Modern Age which is essentially democratic and egalitarian. While democracy as it is understood and practised in the West is formal and political, it has every chance of being revitalised and made more real in the very human sense not merely of Liberty and Equality, but also of *Fraternity* in India. This last quality marks the Brotherhood of Islam as well as the Democracy of Devotion instilled into the Hindu masses by the *Bhakti* movement of the 16th and 17th centuries. This is illustrated by the type of leadership created by the nation. Mahatma Gandhi had a spiritual lineage dating from our remotest past. We can but briefly indicate here these agelong inspirations which have moulded our destiny and continue to do so even today with all our modernism.

The great problem of India in our time is to achieve political liberty not merely for its own sake but for the sake of self-realisation. For India has a soul with a cultural tradition which is as ancient as her history. It is well reflected in her great Epics and *Puranas*, and in the lives of her great apostles of religion, like Buddha. The inspirations of Mahatma Gandhi were derived from all these sources. The *Ahimsa* of Gautama Buddha, the *Dharma Yuddha* (Righteous War) of the *Mahabharata*, and the *Karma Yoga* (Philosophy of Action) of the *Gita*—all

* S. R. Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India*, pp. 872-3.

blended in one stream. In the political field, the struggle for freedom was symbolised by the establishment of Rajasthan and Vijayanagar in medieval times, and the rise of the Maratha and Sikh powers later. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, heralded the dawn of a new Renaissance which tried to envisage the best in the past as well as the present. He was a contemporary of Lord William Bentinck and he not only joined with that reformist Governor-General, as is well known, in the abolition of *Sati*, but also associated himself with every social, educational, religious and political reform as a great pioneer. Himself a versatile scholar in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit, he learnt English—though at a late age—in order to imbibe the spirit of advancement from the West. His idealism created the original Brahmo Samaj which ever since became instrumental in bringing about all-round social progress. While on a mission to England, he died at Bristol in 1833, honoured alike by Englishmen and Indians. The following excerpt from the petition he drew up against the Jury Act of 1827 is illustrative of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's advanced views and independence of spirit:

In his famous Jury Bill, Mr. Wynn, the late President of the Board of Control, has, by introducing religious distinctions into the judicial system of this country, not only afforded just grounds for dissatisfaction among the natives in general but has excited much alarm in the breast of every one conversant with political principles. Any natives, either Hindu or Muhammadan, are rendered by this Bill subject to judicial trial by Christians either European or native, while Christians, including native converts, are exempted from the degradation of being tried either by a Hindu or Mussalman juror, however high he may stand in the estimation of society. This Bill also denies both to Hindus and Muhammadans the honour of a seat on the Grand Jury even in the trial of fellow Hindus or Mussalmans. This is the sum total of Mr. Wynn's late Jury Bill, of which we bitterly complain. Universalism imbibed from the *Upanishads*—the chief source of inspiration of the Brahmo Samaj—was another outstanding feature of Ram Mohan Roy's idealism. His famous letter to the French Foreign Minister contained a remarkable anticipation of the ideology of the League of Nations, suggesting peaceful arbitration in international disputes:

But on general grounds I beg to observe that it appears to me the ends of constitutional government might be better attained by submitting every matter of political

difference between two countries to a Congress composed of an equal number from the Parliament of each; the decision of the majority to be acquiesced in by both nations, and the chairman to be chosen by each nation alternately, for one year, and the place of meeting to be one year within the limits of one country, and next within those of the other: such as Dover and Calais for England and France. By such a Congress all matters of difference, whether political or commercial, affecting the natives of any two civilised countries with constitutional governments, might be settled amicably and justly to the satisfaction of both, and profound peace and friendly feelings might be preserved between them from generation to generation.

The work of the Brahmo Samaj was carried forward through diverse channels by a galaxy of remarkable men as well as institutions. In their hands the stream of social and national service did not run into 'the dreary desert sand of dead habit' but retained its freshness and continued to fertilise the soil of the national mind. If the powerful personality of a Keshab Chandra Sen tended to attract it to exotic influences like those of the Christian missionaries, trying to transform it into 'Christianity without Christ', the equally weighty influence of the great and gifted Tagore family—of Dwarkanath, Debendranath and Rabindranath—prevented its straying from the ancient bed of Upanishadic teaching. This only deepened its Universalism without narrowing it. It developed into the rich humanism of Rabindranath Tagore in our time with its ample harvest of contributions to our national literature, art and philosophy. His Vishwa Bharati taught that "Humanity is a divine harp with many strings, waiting for its one Grand Music. Those who realise this Unity are made ready for the pilgrimage, through its night of sacrifice, to the great meeting of MAN in the future, for which the call comes to us across the darkness". It attracted Western and Eastern savants like Sylvain Levi and Tan Yun-Shan to India. On the other hand, the same message was conveyed to other and distant lands—to America, Europe and Japan—by a noble band of interpreters of our national culture like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, Rabindranath Tagore, and Radhakrishnan. That was a message of Hope, of Advaita (indivisible Unity), and Vasudhaiva-Kutumbakam (Universal Brotherhood). To their own countrymen, these harbingers of a new life imparted a fresh impulse to live, act, think, feel, serve and sacrifice. "Even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, and meeting death face to face, that is what we want," declared Swami Viveka-

nanda, "and that can only be created, established and strengthened by understanding and realising the ideal of *Advaita*—that ideal of the oneness of all. And let me tell you, We want strength, every time strength, and the *Upanishads* are a great mine of strength. Therein lies power to invigorate the whole world... They call, with trumpet voice, upon the weak, the miserable, the down-trodden of all races, all creeds and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free; freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, spiritual freedom, are the watchwords of the *Upanishads*. The truths of the *Upanishads* are before you; take them up, live up to them, and the salvation of India will be at hand."

This was no mere Oriental mysticism. It was reinforced with the Positivism and Activism of the West. "The first gods we have to worship," it declared, "are our own countrymen." "Him I call a *Mahatma*," said Vivekananda, "whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *duratman*. I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any use until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get only kicks. They are practically ourselves. If we want to rejuvenate India, we must work for them. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them. Close your lips and open your hearts. Work out the salvation of your land, each of you thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulders. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel; granite wills that nothing can resist, which penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the Universe." Who will fail to see in these fiery words an anticipation of Mahatma Gandhi's practical philosophy? Yet it is doubtful whether Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda had ever met in life. They were each, nevertheless, the instruments of a common purpose: the creative evolution of Modern India. There were also numerous others who set their hands to the building of this great Mansion.

Like the Brahmo Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission (founded by Vivekananda) in Bengal, with a parallel impulse for reform, were founded the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay (1867), the Arya Samaj in the Punjab (1875), and the Theosophical Society in Madras (1882). All of these were primarily actuated by a religious idealism wanting to purify popular Hinduism of its dross of superstitions and

the accumulated rust of centuries with fresh inspirations from the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and the Songs of the Saints, etc. "In truth," writes Mrs. Besant, "any movement to be strong in India must rest on a religious basis; and so interwoven with religion is the very fibre of the Indian heart, that it only throbs with full response when the religious note has been struck which calls out its sympathetic vibration." Nevertheless, some of these religious foundations or individual workers connected with them, played an important part in the general revivalist movements in the country, whether religious, social, educational or political. It is common knowledge that the establishment of important political powers like those of the Marathas and the Sikhs were preceded by great religious movements. Hence it is not to be wondered at that the birth of the modern Swaraj movement, too, was preceded by a vigorous religious revival. At the same time, it is not to be forgotten that this revivalism was *reformist*—socially speaking—and not *reactionary* in its character. One common feature underlying all was their emphasis on monotheism, their denunciation of the caste-system and early marriages, and their faith in education as a powerful lever in the general social uplift and advancement. With the exception of the Arya Samaj, which reacted rather violently to the proselytising activities of the Christian and Muslim missionaries, all others were broad-based upon the principle of toleration. What Vivekananda said of his great Master (Ramakrishna Paramahansa) is true also of the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj and the Theosophical Society. "To proclaim and make clear," wrote the great Swami, "the fundamental unity underlying all religions was the mission of my Master. . . He left every religion undisturbed because he had realised that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of the one Eternal Religion."

To find unity in the midst of diversity has been the eternal quest of India. In the modern age she was not content with doing this in the religious and metaphysical fields only. The spirit of the times was tending more and more to secular ideals, particularly intellectual and political. In consonance with this, institutions with a new outlook and programmes of national service were coming into existence. The simultaneous foundation of the Deccan Education Society in Poona and the Indian National Congress in Bombay, in 1885, are illustrative of the new trends. "We have undertaken this work of popular education," declared one of the founders of the former Society, "with the firmest conviction and belief that, of all agents of human civilisation, education is the only one that brings

about material, moral and religious regeneration of fallen countries, and raises them up to the level of most advanced nations, by slow and peaceful revolutions." Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who later founded the Servants of India Society (1905), with equal insight said, "One of the most anxious, as it is one of the most important, problems confronting us today is how to supply guidance, at once wise and patriotic, to our young men, so that their lives may be directed into channels of high purpose and earnest endeavour, in the service of the Mother-land. To sustain, on the one hand, the pure impulses and generous enthusiasms of youth, and on the other to instil into young minds a due sense of proportion and of responsibility and a correct realisation of the true needs of the country—this can never be an easy task, and in the present deeds of India, it is beset with extraordinary difficulties." It was in this *milieu*, and the 'discontent growing into disaffection' at the unresponsive foreign bureaucratic government described in the last chapter, that the Indian National Congress, the most powerful instrument of our national liberation and uplift, came into existence.

It is impossible to compress the history of this great institution which has brought about one of the most momentous revolutions of our times, and in a manner unparalleled elsewhere, within the compass of a few pages. We have necessarily to omit many details, and we shall rather indicate the most outstanding trends and vital features than dwell on events and personalities that shaped that history. The only exception to these limitations will be the role of Mahatma Gandhi, because we cannot write the history of our freedom without mentioning something about him. He transformed the Congress, and through it the country, much as Shivaji did the Marathas or Guru Govind Singh did the Sikhs, and even more.

Before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, in 1919, the aim of the Indian National Congress was officially stated to be "the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit, and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country." It began its activities with petitioning Government, remonstrating, criticising, and agitating through its annual sessions held

in different parts of India, and through the agencies of the press and platform. It naturally, and rapidly, grew into an unofficial Opposition to the Government. A. O. Hume remarked, "The National Congress endeavoured to educate Government, but Government refused to be instructed." It demanded the abolition of the India Council, the holding of simultaneous examinations in India for the I.C.S., the expansion of the legislatures with increased powers for the elected representatives, the absolute separation of the executive and the judiciary, the relaxation of the Arms Act and Press Laws, etc. It also demanded patronage of Indian industries and the spread of education among the masses. Above all, it demanded rapid and increasing Indianisation of the services and the entire administration. But all this proved, for the most part, a cry in the wilderness; for the deaf and dumb Bureaucracy regarded the Congress as unrepresentative of the 'teeming millions' and as consisting only of a 'microscopic minority' of 'disgruntled B.A.s'. Yet a revolution was impending and it could neither be averted nor suppressed. The sense of frustration was growing in the country, particularly during Curzon's regime and it made even moderate Indians like Gokhale say that to find a parallel to Lord Curzon's administration it was necessary to go back to the times of Aurangzeb. The official Report of the Congress for the year (1905) recorded:

Never since the dark days of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty had India been so distracted, discontented, despondent; the victim of so many misfortunes, political and other; the target for so much scorn and calumny emanating from the highest quarters—its most moderate demands ridiculed and scouted, its most reasonable prayers greeted with a stiff negative, its noblest aspirations spurned and denounced as pure mischief or solemn nonsense, its most cherished ideals hurled down from their pedestal and trodden under foot—never had the condition of India been more critical than it was during the second ill-starred administration of Lord Curzon. The Official Secrets Act was passed in the teeth of universal opposition. It was condemned by the whole Press—Indian and Anglo-Indian—protests from all quarters poured in, but Lord Curzon was implacable, and the Gagging Act was passed. Education was crippled and mutilated; it was made expensive and it was officialised... In the matter of employment of Indians in the higher grades of the public service, Lord Curzon... was at last compelled to throw off his mask, and tell the educated Indians publicly... that the bar sinister of race was between them and the higher posts which they coveted, that their hopes

in that direction were vain and doomed to disappointment, and that in relying upon the Queen's Proclamation they were relying upon a broken reed... His unlucky Convocation Address raised the national temper to fever-heat, and the whole country was shocked and amazed. The whole Indian people, smarting under the afflictions of plague and famine, of broken pledges and repressive measures, rose as one man against the monstrous and studied insult, flung with a high-magisterial air, at everything that they loved and revered, at their religion, their literature, their social institutions—at the forces which shaped their past, the hopes which animate the present, the ideals which beckon them onward from a dim and distant future. Never in the whole course of British rule in India was the highest representative of the Sovereign denounced so strongly, publicly, and universally from one end of the country to the other as was Lord Curzon for his unjust, unwise, and impolitic pronouncement.

Despite the hypersensitive tone of this criticism the facts that provoked it were so real that Gopal Krishna Gokhale declared with deep mortification: "The Indian's only business is to be governed, and it was a sacrilege on his part to have any other aspiration. In his scheme of things there was no room for the educated classes of the country... If the opinions of even such men (i.e., educated leaders) are to be brushed aside with contempt, if all Indians are to be treated as dumb driven cattle, if men whom any other country would delight to honour, are to be thus made to realise the utter humiliation and helplessness of their position in their own country, then all I can say is: 'Good-bye to all hope of co-operation in any way with the bureaucracy, in the interests of the people.' I can conceive of no graver indictment of British rule than that such a state of things should be possible after a hundred years of that rule." This feeling of 'utter humiliation and helplessness' born of a deep-rooted sense of national frustration, was driving India to desperation. Radicalism could no longer be held in leash. Still the characteristically Indian habit of finding food for philosophising in materially intolerable conditions made Surendranath Banerji derive satisfaction from the "unjust, unwise, and impolitic" rule of Lord Curzon: "He has built better than he knew," he declared; "he has laid broad and deep the foundations of our national life; he has stimulated those forces which contribute to the upbuilding of nations; he has made us a nation; and the most reactionary of the Indian Viceroys will go down to posterity as the architect of the Indian national life."

But not the whole of India—especially ‘Young India’—was so patient or philosophical. ‘The passionate claim of the European to predominance was to be answered by the passionate claim of the Indian to equality.’ The victory of Japan over Russia ushered in a new era of self-confidence to all Asian peoples. “The reverberations of that victory,” Curzon himself admitted, “have gone like a thunderclap through the whispering galleries of the East.” Nevertheless, Britain seemed to believe that she could hold India by force. This is reflected in the reported reactions of *The Times* to the first meeting of the nationalists in 1885, as well as the persistent policy of repression followed by the Bureaucracy in India. Commenting on the innocent and pious resolutions passed by the Congress at Calcutta, in December 1886, *The Times* wrote:

The first question which this series of resolutions will suggest is whether India is ripe for the transformation which they involve. If this can be answered in the affirmative, the days of English rule are numbered. If India can govern itself, our stay in the country is not called for. All we have to do is to preside over the construction of the new system and then to leave it to work.’ Further, it went on to say: ‘To throw it (the Viceroy’s Council) open to elected members, and to give minorities a statutable right to be heard before a Parliamentary Committee, would be an introduction of Home Rule for India in about as troublesome a form as could be devised. Do what we will, the government of India cannot be made constitutional... The educated classes may find fault with their exclusion from full political rights: political privileges they can obtain in the degree in which they prove themselves deserving of them. But *it was by force that India was won, and it is by force that India must be governed*, in whatever hands the government of the country may be vested.’

Though in later times British Imperialism was less blatant in the declaration of its policy towards India, it was not less determined to hold us in its iron grip, howsoever it ensconced in the velvet glove the hard truth of its mailed fist. When Mr. Winston Churchill categorically excluded India from the assurances of the Atlantic Charter, and asseverated that he had not become His Majesty’s Prime Minister ‘in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire,’ he meant nothing less.

We shall not go into the sorry tale of repression and the inevitable revolutionary crimes it entailed. The fact is, as Lala Lajpat Rai said, “A nation once awakened, and awakened rightly, can never be put down.”

'For freedom's battle once begun,
Tho' baffl'd oft, is ever won!'

The entry of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian struggle gave it a new turn and imparted to it a new force, character and meaning. If India's freedom was to be worth anything, it was to be achieved by methods other than those ordinarily adopted by nations. "Other nations have been votaries of brute force," declared the Mahatma; "India can win all by soul force." Again and yet again he said, "I would wait, if need be, for ages, rather than seek the freedom of my country through bloody means." "My nationalism includes the well-being of the whole world... I do not want my India to rise on the ashes of other nations... I want India to be strong in order that she can infect the other nations also with her strength. Not so with a single nation in Europe today; they do not give strength to the others." "I have no diplomacy save that of Truth; I have no weapon but Non-violence." "God has chosen me as His instrument for presenting Non-violence to India for dealing with her ills,—even to the world." "If the Congress fails me, I have my own organisation, *myself*. I am a man possessed by an idea. If such a man cannot get an organisation, he himself becomes an organisation. *I will appeal to the people's instincts*. I may arouse them." He did appeal to the people's instincts, and did arouse them—unto victory. He led us to our freedom—Swaraj—through 'blood, sweat, tears, and toil,' but the blood that was shed was our own, and not of Englishmen.

In spite of the freshness reflected in the above, it was still the ancient Voice of India: the voice of Gautama Buddha who went to the masses and preached to them the doctrine of equality and *Ahimsa*: 'Evil is not overcome by evil; evil is overcome by good'. There has been a continuity of idealism in India, though it is often missed by hasty readers of our history. Mahatma Gandhi owned himself the spiritual disciple of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The latter, on the other hand, declared, "In all my life I have known only two men who have affected me spiritually in the manner that Gandhi does—our great patriarch, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and my late master, Mr. Ranade, men before whom not only are we ashamed of doing anything unworthy but in whose presence our very minds are afraid of thinking anything that is unworthy." The links were sustained all through. Mahatma Gandhi himself, in his turn, said, "I am but the heir of Lokamanya (Bal Gangadhar Tilak) and if I do not add to the patrimony he has left me, I would not be a worthy son of a worthy father." He also added, "Jawaharlal will be my successor. When I am

gone, he will speak my language... Jawahar is my legitimate heir. He is quite capable of mounting the gallows with a smile on his lips." "When I fancied I was taking my last breath, the *Gita* was my solace."

The steps by which we attained our national independence, as the fruit of the struggle of *Satyagraha* under the matchless leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, have been described in the preceding chapter. We may close this section with an excerpt from the Congress Manifesto of 1945:

For sixty years the National Congress... laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at the leash that held them in bondage, ever trying to unloose themselves from it. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone suffering in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into conflict with the armed might of a great empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts but gained new strength from them. After the recent three years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, the Congress has risen stronger than ever and become more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and

territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal of all barriers to equality.

The Congress has envisaged a free democratic state with the fundamental rights and liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the constitution. This constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise... Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence and march together to the free India of our dreams.

2. Fulfilment

This dream came true at midnight of 14-15th August 1947, though in an imperfect form because of the partition. India had come into her own, and, as Nehru put it, "awoke to Life and Freedom". But Destiny had chosen to test us in the very hour of triumph. It seemed that we had not paid the full price for what we were about to celebrate—our Independence. So the Radcliffe division made torrents of blood and tears flow from the hearts of the uprooted millions of India and Pakistan before we had time to think. We had acquiesced in the Partition plan without counting the cost. Pakistan created more problems than it was expected to solve. It did not solve the problem of the Muslim minorities in India the way it intended: it only piled on top of it the problem of non-Muslims in Pakistan. It created the new and knotty problem of Kashmir, not to speak of others. Above all, immediately, it created the problem (or a complexity of problems) of evacuation of millions of men, women and children from both parts of the INDIA that was. It was no longer a simple question of drawing a line of administrative separation with a gubernatorial pen across the heart of a province, as had been the case when Curzon partitioned Bengal. Muslims and non-Muslims on either side of the frontiers were to be shifted into homeless tracts, with no previous planning, in the two Punjabs and the two Bengals: West and East. The people whose communal feelings had been worked up to white heat, particularly in the Punjab, took the law into their own hands with dire consequences.

To confine our attention to only our side of the border, the new Government of India, hardly in the saddle, was

confronted precipitately with a problem stupendous enough to stagger even a seasoned administration under normal conditions. Yet it tackled it with a courage and capacity justifying Shri Nehru's complacent statement: "In future history it will be said that vast and colossal as this problem was, something which might shake the very foundations of Government and the social order, the people of India stood up to it bravely, tackled it and, I hope, ultimately solved it to the advantage of the Nation." Some idea could be gained of the enormousness of the task if it is realised that the number of people evacuated, in the course of less than four months, was 5,500,000 from Western Pakistan, and 1,750,000 from Eastern. Of these, 27,500 were flown by air in 962 flights; 133,000 were brought in ships; 1,362,000 travelled by rail; 4,27,000 in motor trucks; and no fewer than 8,49,000 trekked on foot (between 18th September and 29th October, 1947). The loss in life, limb and property entailed by this colossal migration—unprecedented in recorded human history—was beyond calculation. Mere agricultural land left in West Pakistan alone exceeded that left by the Muslims of East Punjab by 1,200,000 acres. The problems of relief and rehabilitation created by this mass uprooting of humanity are still exercising the best statesmanship and executive capacity possessed by our countrymen.

At one critical moment, Mr. Churchill, who had managed the adroit evacuation of a disciplined army from Dunkirk and organised victory over the terrific forces of Hitler, felt like suggesting a reoccupation of India, if only to save us from ourselves: he might have attempted that had England given him the chance. But Labour being in power, he had to content himself with saying: "I told you so." There were other Englishmen, however, who thought differently. Mr. Fenner Brockway, for example, wrote on the first anniversary of our Independence:

The new Indian Government had to meet a situation which might have broken the heart of lesser men. The distressing communal strife with which the new era of freedom began, the conflict in Kashmir, the dispute about Hyderabad and, above all, the assassination of Gandhiji made the course of the Government hard and critical. I think the whole world, except for a few imperialist diehards, recognises the outstanding ability which Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues have shown in surmounting the intricate problems with which they were faced. Before India attained her freedom I used to say that she could form a government no less capable in its

personnel than our governments in Britain. The history of this year has proved this to be true. "If some hopes have proved dupes," said the redoubtable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, our Deputy Prime Minister, "many fears have proved liars." Few others could have said that with the self-confidence of the Sardar arising out of his weighty achievement in the States Department. "Let no one feel," he added, "that we are not alive to the dangers and the seriousness of the problems that face us. Let them reflect on the difficult legacies we received, the handicaps under which we laboured, the dangers we had to face, the disasters we had to surmount and the embarrassments we had to avoid. Surely, if in spite of them we are still on our feet and are able to look the whole world in the face, it is a testimony to our vitality, our courage, and our faith." The hard-headed, practical realist proved that not a word of his was born of vanity or the habit of exaggeration.

How freedom matters is now being illustrated in India in innumerable ways. The nation appears to have suddenly come of age and is blossoming like the trees in Spring putting forth a thousand sprouts in all directions. But nothing is, perhaps, more impressive than the rapid disappearance of the "States" in the first few months of our Independence. They have dried up like dew drops before the advancing rays of the morning sun. No better proof of their entire dependence on the British support can be given. Though some of them were shining exceptions to the general rule, most of the "States" constituted a bulwark of the Old Order—feudal no less than Imperial. Nevertheless, a bloodless revolution has been brought about in the course of months rather than years. As Sir C. P. Ramaswamy observed: "The time-spirit was irresistible and the drama of history unrolled itself and Sardar Patel rode the storm proving himself to be an astute judge of human nature and of the potentialities and dispositions of the Rulers as a class." What Dalhousie and Canning were unable to do during many years, Sardar Patel achieved in a few months; but such an achievement would have been impossible but for the mental unpreparedness of most of the Rulers to meet a situation which they had only imperfectly envisaged, and also the rapidly converging national demand for Responsible Government which would not brook any delay and would not put up with any alternative solutions save those advocated under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi."

When the British Government decided to withdraw from India, they proclaimed the release of all the Princes from their Paramountcy as well as Treaty obligations. This was

fraught with a danger which, but for the patriotism of the Princes themselves and Sardar Patel's astute diplomacy and statesmanship, might have overwhelmed India with a disaster of an insurmountable magnitude. There were at least 562 "States" technically "independent" after midnight of the middle of August, 1947. They could have plunged India back into the chaos of the eighteenth century. That the calamity was averted will go down into history as one of the political miracles of our age.

Out of the territories of pre-Partition India, with a total area of 15,81,410 square miles, the Indian States occupied 7,15,964 square miles, i.e., about 45 per cent. In post-Partition India, this percentage was raised to 48, as the Dominion territory was reduced to 12,20,099 square miles. The total population of the States before Partition, according to the census of 1941, was 9,31,89,233, while that of the rest of India was 38,89,97,955. After Partition, these figures stood respectively at 8,88,08,434 and 38,89,97,955. The proportion of 'States' people to other Indians had consequently increased from 24 to 27 per cent. on account of the Partition.

Now most of the 'states' have been completely merged into the contiguous States or otherwise assimilated with the rest of India. Others have been formed into Unions like the 8 States of East Punjab and Patiala, 14 States of Rajasthan (in which are now merged the 4 States of the Matsya Union), the 22 States of Madhya Bharat in Central India, 33 States of Vindhya Pradesh, and 24 States of Himachal Pradesh, etc. No fewer than 449 petty estates and principalities have gone into the Union of Saurashtra or Kathiawar. Among the more prominent States to be absorbed more recently were the Southern Maratha States (Sangli, Miraj, etc.), with Kolhapur and Baroda,—all merged in Bombay State. Despite the recalcitrance of Junagadh and Hyderabad, they were brought into the Indian Union by the will of the people as against their "disloyal" rulers. Cochin and Travancore were the last to form a Union, at the moment of our writing. But events are moving so rapidly that the final set-up cannot be forecast at any moment. But everywhere Democracy has triumphed and Unity as well as uniformity are being realised with a tempo that has exploded the British myth of our national unripeness for even Dominion Status under the ægis of the British Crown. Communal electorates are no more!

Despite the example of Eire, we have chosen to remain in the Commonwealth at the same time that we decided to become a Sovereign Democratic Republic with no allegiance

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Despite the example of Eire, we have chosen to remain in the Commonwealth at the same time that we decided to become a Sovereign Democratic Republic with no allegiance

to the British monarch. Enigmatic as this may appear to constitutional pundits and political purists, our tutelage under the pragmatic British people has not been in vain. Life indeed is greater than mere syllogistic logic, and we have proved ourselves the votaries of LIFE. In our foreign relations, therefore, we have refused to get entangled with 'power blocs'. Our being in the Commonwealth upon the "free and honourable" terms settled at the London Conference does not detract from this ideal of Independence. "It is not, so far as we are concerned," as Prime Minister Nehru declared, "a negative policy of neutrality but a positive approach to world problems aimed, above all, at furthering the cause of peace in the world, a positive approach also in Asia and more especially in South-East Asia, where conditions are in a state of upheaval." "I should like to utilise the influence of India," he added, "in a particular direction, and that is, in throwing her weight in the scales for the avoidance of war... It seems to me obvious that, while in the context of today the problems of Europe are important, the problems of Asia are far more important from that very point of view—not only the Asian point of view but the world point of view of war and peace."

"Indian independence," said our first truly national and constitutional Governor-General, Sri C. Rajagopalachari, "has removed an incubus from the whole of Asia... Internationally, Indian independence is the biggest single contribution to world-peace which British statesmen have made."

NOTE: THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Preamble

We, the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens:

Justice, social, economic and political;

Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

Equality of status and opportunity;

and to promote among them all

Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation;

In our Constituent Assembly this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution.

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